

La gestión universitaria y su influencia en los procesos de acreditación en la universidad técnica de Babahoyo 2023

University management and its influence on the accreditation processes at the technical university of Babahoyo 2023

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Palabras**claves:**

Gestión
universitaria,
Acreditación,
Inclusión,
Calidad

Resumen

Introducción: los retos de educar con condiciones de calidad y políticas inclusivas se ha vuelto en el mayor desafío que enfrenta la universidad ecuatoriana, lograr competencias en los estudiantes universitarios con la finalidad de impulsar el desarrollo sostenible y sustentable del entorno donde se desenvuelven, situación que hace necesario asegurar que las universidades puedan ser Acreditadas para brindar un servicio educativo inclusivo y de calidad. **Objetivo:** determinar la forma en que la gestión universitaria influye en los procesos de acreditación en la Universidad Técnica de Babahoyo. **Metodología:** de enfoque cuantitativo, por cuanto el proceso de acreditación demanda el cumplimiento objetivo de metas, las cuales se verifican a través de las evidencias que muestran el logro en los parámetros de la calidad. **Resultados:** los resultados de la investigación evidenciaron que si bien el proceso de acreditación del año 2019 fue observado y no se logró la Acreditación institucional, ello se debió a que no se lograron cumplir con los estándares que exigía el CACES en cuanto a los elementos fundamentales y sus respectivos indicadores y que ahora la gestión universitaria con visión inclusiva emprendió un fortalecimiento a los procesos de planificación pertinente, ejecución objetiva y constante evaluación. **Conclusiones:** se concluye que el nivel de relación existente entre la gestión universitaria y los procesos de acreditación es alto, la misma que se corrobora con un coeficiente de correlación de Rho de Spearman de 0.890, por lo cual se establece que a mejor gestión universitaria, mejores procesos de acreditación. **Área de estudio general:** Educación. **Área de estudio específica:** Gestión de la educación.

Keywords:

University
management,
Accreditation,
Inclusion,
Quality

Abstract

Introduction: The challenges of educating with quality conditions and inclusive policies have become the greatest challenge facing Ecuadorian universities, to achieve competencies in university students to promote the sustainable and sustainable development of the environment where they develop, a situation that makes it necessary to ensure that universities can be accredited to provide an inclusive and quality educational service. **Objective:** To determine the way in which university management influences the accreditation processes at the Technical University of Babahoyo.

Methodology: quantitative approach, since the accreditation process demands the objective fulfillment of goals, which are verified through the evidence that shows the achievement in the quality parameters. **Results:** The results of the investigation showed that although the accreditation process of 2019 was observed and institutional accreditation was not achieved, this was due to the fact that it was not possible to comply with the standards required by CACES in terms of the fundamental elements and their respective indicators and that now the university management with an inclusive vision undertook a strengthening of the relevant planning processes, Objective execution and constant evaluation. **Conclusions:** It is concluded that the level of relationship between university management and accreditation processes is high, which is corroborated by a Spearman's Rho correlation coefficient of 0.890, which is why it is established that the better university management, the better accreditation processes. **General Area of Study:** Education. Specific area of study: Education management.

Introduction

Higher education institutions (HEIs) comply with a set of established standards, with the aim of generating quality education, which allows for the establishment of educational dynamics that are supported by the different management processes and in this way ensure that competent professionals emerge who assume a leading role in the development of the environment in which they live and of the country.

In the face of global educational changes in the world, the Government of Argentina (2023) through its spokespersons has expressed the intention of promoting models to improve the quality and creativity in the performance of higher education functions. The central axes of university management are reflected upon and the application of tools to design institutional intervention projects that improve the quality of the university educational service is deepened.

According to what was mentioned by Trujillo (2022), he refers that the accreditation of Higher Education Institutions in Ecuador begins with a self-assessment, in which the necessary elements must be identified to understand that the procedures aimed at demonstrating quality education are being followed, and which in turn allow them to identify the critical points that stop this purpose; it is worth mentioning that for this, the university community must be involved.

In Chile, Moyano (2023) stated that, in order to discuss changes in institutional accreditation and training programs due to new criteria and quality standards recently implemented, educational authorities were invited to address upcoming changes and generate ideas and proposals in the medium and long term through the General Directorate of Quality Assurance.

In Ecuador, the Technical University of Babahoyo [UTB], throughout its history, has undergone accreditation evaluations as a university education center, which over time allowed it to continue providing university educational services. However, in 2019, the last accreditation evaluation carried out by the Ecuadorian entity for verifying compliance with quality standards, the Council for the Assurance of the Quality of Higher Education [CACES], showed that the university did not comply with these requirements, which led to the UTB not obtaining accreditation and that at the same time, based on the regulations established in the country, it was given the opportunity to present an Improvement Plan for accreditation purposes and to follow the dynamics of the accreditation processes for the aforementioned plan. The authorities of the university, who only assumed the management of the UTB in that year with Dr. Marcos Oviedo Rodríguez as rector, assumed the commitment to establish all the necessary efforts leading to accreditation. It is in this sense that, faced with such a situation, the question arises: How does university management influence the accreditation processes at the Technical University of Babahoyo? This question marked the milestone of putting into action the different university instances as well as the community that comprises it, to unify criteria and efforts in order to achieve the purpose: Accreditation.

University Management

According to Medina (2015, cited in Henríquez et al., 2022), he argued that university management is defined as strategies executed by leaders and groups to ensure the achievement of the educational project in a sustainable and viable manner, meeting minimum requirements. He also mentions the importance of having skills to make technical decisions and comply with the governance of the institutional plan in a changing environment (p. 366). Likewise, Castro (2022) argued that university management must adapt and promote improvements in the quality and efficiency of its functions and processes to face the demands of the environment and the scarcity of resources (p. 548).

Among the characteristics that this management must present, according to Véliz-Briones et al. (2016, cited in Henríquez et al., 2022), they refer that management includes direction, leadership and/or coordination of strategies and tasks, both individual and group, to achieve objectives and solve administrative and financial problems at different levels of the organization (p. 366). For his part, Castro (2022) specifies that we have to worry about the rationalization of human and financial resources in all management. It is crucial to create policies that reorganize regulatory frameworks and allocate resources in

a planned manner to achieve established goals. Regulation is essential in this case. If university regulations are not updated first, there may be gaps that generate conflicts due to different interpretations (p. 549).

Planning

Supo (2020) stated that planning is the formulation of action plans to anticipate and shape the future. It consists of determining the actions necessary to achieve the organization's objectives in an established period of time (p. 83). In addition, Pulido et al. (2023) argued that planning implies that the manager and his team at the HEI decide what to do and how to achieve it, focusing on strategies that promote pedagogical excellence and are aligned with the mission and vision of the educational project (p. 12). And that within the characteristics that planning presents according to Supo (2020), he refers that, in planning, public universities establish main objectives: the vision and the mission. These should be the guide to achieve medium and long-term objectives (p. 87).

Tapia-Claro et al. (2022) stated that universities focus on improving management at its most basic level to achieve their goals. The objective was to create a theoretical model for management with a focus on the processes of the academic year. This approach, as a management method, helps to improve results. Professor management fits into the plan-execute-evaluate-improve cycle in universities. Likewise, Duran-Seguel et al. (2023) stated that it is necessary to make pertinent and timely strategic decisions for the development of universities, implementing them quickly and with a vision for the future. The main objective is to analyze the most relevant consequences of the strategic decisions adopted at the university to implement the new management model. The successful implementation of the model is due to factors such as: representative leadership, strategic alignment, concrete goals, effective communication, measurement of indicators and relevant academic incentives (p. 176).

Castro (2022) argued that in the current era, there is a frequent debate about the quality of higher education due to its exponential and diverse growth. Globalization and changes in education have caused a reconsideration of the current teaching method. The university diversification policy is based on its heterogeneity and is divided into professional staff, administrative and support staff, and students with diverse characteristics such as age, aspirations, institutional commitment, schedule, and social situation where collective participation is promoted as an inclusive context (p. 547). Cisternas (2021) also expressed that the university is considered a complex system that is maintained and expanded through decisions. In an uncertain and complex context such as that of Latin America, institutional analysis is crucial to protect the university from possible disintegrations. The university must adopt evidence-based management models to face its complex and competitive environment (p. 1).

Machado & Tlczani (2023) stated that they seek to propose guidelines for university management of academic processes based on information technology (IT). The guidelines for university administration include administrative management, the use and appropriation of technologies, and information security in relation to information technologies and implementation challenges. The use of information technologies in university administration promotes the connection between academic management, facilitating the efficient achievement of institutional objectives by coordinators (pp. 357-358). In the same sense, Sánchez et al. (2020) argued that the objective is to provide a tool for university management that guarantees the achievement of institutional goals, projects, programs and plans. Universities seek to improve their services through exhaustive identification and analysis, as well as efficient work processes (p. 10).

Execution

Paz (2022) argued that university management seeks to improve teaching and carry out academic activities with standards suitable for optimally training professionals. Public and private universities achieve continuous improvement in their management, which allows some universities to obtain the SUNEDU institutional license for educational quality (p. 12). On the other hand, Pulido et al. (2023) stated that to promote coordination in the execution of educational management, it involves using resources and developing established processes, programs and projects. The distribution of tasks and roles is implemented through a structure of power and duties, and a model of connections between participants and their environment (p.12).

Terán et al. (2023) argued that university management must present characteristics such as being sustainable and focused on continuously improving higher education and environmental management for the good of humanity. Public and private alliances to achieve efficient and measurable results (p. 159). In addition, Corral et al. (2020) argued the importance of analyzing how electronic government impacts the management of university institutions during non-attendance due to COVID-19. An electronic government strategy can modernize university functions by intensively virtualizing its activities to add value. In short, a virtual education strategy seeks to transform university processes and take advantage of ICT and virtuality in situations of social isolation (p. 457).

Bravo & Avilés (2020) argued that the execution of administrative processes is essential to ensure institutional efficiency. The impact of administrative management on the academic services of the public university is analyzed to improve the structure and functionality of the academic, administrative and financial areas, in line with the objectives of the institution. It is advisable to use information technologies to reduce necessary procedures and documents (pp. 252-265). Likewise, Domínguez (2020) stated that executive management (ED) improves organizational performance by considering

the internal and external environment. The application encourages strategic thinking and willingness to change to address problems. This involves improving training in the DE, promoting events and sharing knowledge through scientific production to reach more academics (pp. 1,19).

Alban (2023) stated that the monitoring of the Annual Operating Plan (POA) should be automated by diagnosing the deficiencies of the current processes. The results obtained include identifying the processes, analyzing the challenges, identifying current POA requirements, and evaluating the feasibility of automating the monitoring (p. 2). Interiano (2023) also stated that the goal is to highlight the relevance of adequate planning and, above all, pertinent execution in public sector institutions. Highlighting the crucial role of Latin American public institutions in the execution of strategic and operational planning is to achieve the objectives and goals established in a given period (pp. 87-88).

Assessment

Chávez (2020) stated that the evaluation of university management must guarantee the fulfillment of the mission and responsibility towards society, considering the influence on knowledge and culture (p. 14). Likewise, Castro (2022) stated that university management demands a lot of responsibility to evaluate the fulfillment of institutional goals, linked to social interests, based on intellectual and cultural roots, generating the participation of all those involved (p. 553).

González & Rosa (2023) stated that to improve university management, they have adopted changes in their approach and practices. The Strategic Plan was created jointly, and the directors included the objectives in their annual operating plans. A specialized academic unit was partially in charge of monitoring and evaluation, with that purpose in mind (p. 1). Figueredo-Díaz (2021) also maintained that authorities must manage their management process, taking into account the fundamental activities of the administrator: Planning, Organization, Direction and Monitoring. Ideally, these activities would be constantly reviewed to improve the attention provided to members of the university community and guarantee access to a quality educational system (p. 106).

Ramos-Castro & Hernández-Nariño (2022) stated that performance management is useful to improve processes and achieve organizational objectives, through the implementation of concrete actions that contribute to the effectiveness of the organization. Various instruments are used, such as the selection and presentation of indicators, audits, cost evaluation, and satisfaction surveys (p. 9). In addition, Meza et al. (2020) argued that current university management must increase relevance and solve problems that hinder the progress of universities towards accreditation. The context requires information for quality decisions in institutional processes. The objective is to develop a procedure to build indicators that provide objective information to decision-making, based on the

needs of stakeholders, the institutional philosophical framework, and key success factors (p. 1).

Accreditation process

De la Garza (2013, cited in Parra et al., 2019) argued that accreditation of higher education is a global government priority to improve quality and respond to social and economic needs (p. 17). Likewise, González (2021) stated that accreditation is the evaluation of university programs with quality standards by a recognized and accredited organization (p. 7).

On the other hand, Parra et al. (2019) argued that accreditation is crucial to determine the scope of certain characteristics in the academic organization of HEIs. These indicators include attention to demand, school routes, incorporation and promotion of teachers, as well as curricular review (p. 24). González (2021) also stated that the accreditation process focuses on evaluating quality through management, administration, teachers and students, curriculum, teaching techniques, dissemination, outreach and extension, infrastructure and financing. Each area is developed without an overview of the institution, which makes it difficult to meet quality standards and requires the articulation of departments (p. 23).

Self-assessment

López et al. (2022) stated that self-assessment is essential for the accreditation process and quality assurance of educational programs, being the first step for the institution to obtain public recognition. They also express that self-assessment focuses on administration and not on the analysis and reflection of the processes, due to the structure of the instruments provided by the accrediting bodies. Self-assessment is seen as a technical process rather than a way to improve (pp. 3, 13).

Ravela (2020) also argued that institutional self-assessment requires fostering a culture of formative assessment, which consists of establishing routines to continually review and improve the educational structure, teaching methods, and student assessment. It needs to be an institution confident in its abilities to move forward and accustomed to implementing constant changes. Additionally, he mentions that self-assessment is carried out by the professionals and teams of the educational institution. It seeks to develop institutional skills through the joint review of learning goals. Self-assessment involves the development of the capacity for collective learning in an organization through institutional metacognition (pp. 11, 12).

Bodes & Ruiz (2019) expressed the importance of having quality paradigms, their influence and change in today's society as well as in higher education. The distinctive elements of the accreditation guide for the quality of the higher education system and its

key components as a guarantee of quality of the processes are presented. In addition, the need for the university to use organizational and management systems that address challenges at the national and global level is recognized (p. 1). Likewise, Cruz and Cáceres (2022) argued that the accreditation of educational programs comes from international demands and the growing interest of Higher Education Institutions in quality programs, but they are carried out from the administrative sphere, without considering the participation or perception of students. The purpose is to put forward a proposal to form a learning community that promotes the culture of evaluation in the accreditation of educational programs (p. 20).

Gamba (2020) argued the importance of reviewing and diagnosing the requirements of the UNE-EN ISO/IEC 17025:2017 Standard to implement and obtain laboratory accreditation. This will improve internal processes and increase confidence in the results. In addition, recognition is sought at a national level, validating technical competencies and the reliability of results through management and technical requirements, thus improving the quality of practices in laboratories (p. 13).

External evaluation

According to CACES (2019, cited in Santana & Santana, 2021), external evaluation promotes the continuous improvement of HEIs, whether for accreditation purposes or not. Furthermore, this evaluation is permanent, continuous, dialogical and projected in the long term. Quality is ensured by being rooted in the academic and organizational practices of the members of the institution (p. 14).

Likewise, Santana & Santana (2021) express that self-assessment in universities should be guided for an effective external evaluation. However, if it is carried out only based on the same model of the evaluating body, the importance of critical self-reflection of university communities is lost (p. 15). Montano et al. (2021) also argue that external evaluation improves training, identifying difficulties and correcting deficiencies at key points, both for students and teachers (p. 2).

Addine et al. (2020) argued that the quality of higher education is a challenge for professionals and institutions in charge of ensuring, evaluating and accrediting it. The constant improvement of the SEA-IES is a solution to this demand. It is based on evaluations of institutions in recent years, both successful and unsuccessful (p. 1). For his part, Aburto (2021) argued that his objective is to share university experiences in the application of institutional self-assessment processes through accrediting agencies to obtain national and international accreditation (p. 75).

Ramos et al. (2021) argued that in order to comply with institutional accreditation, the University must have a process map. The process map is formulated with a process

approach, to organize all the activities and the work system. This is a fundamental step to address accreditation and generates valuable input for external evaluation (p. 176). For their part, Taimis et al. (2021) stated that the evaluation and accreditation processes of courses indicate the need to evaluate the quality of Higher Education. The results of the evaluation and accreditation of the University are intended to be shared socially. For this, methodological tools such as document analysis, surveys, interviews with experts and employers are used. These tools declare the good practices in the external evaluation participated by the authors (p. 55).

Monitoring for continuous improvement

Hernández et al. (2021) stated that continuous improvement involves anticipating the client's future needs in professional training. This leads to the sustained success of the organization (p. 3). For their part, Cué-Cedeño et al. (2020) expressed that continuous improvement is based on process management, the interaction between structures, processes, strategies and human and material resources, focused on fulfilling the institutional mission (p. 36).

Delgado-Barra et al. (2021) argued that continuous improvement brings an organization closer to its vision. The Deming circle, also known as the PDCA cycle, is widely used to improve quality, reduce failures, increase effectiveness and efficiency, solve problems, and prevent risks (p. 3). Furthermore, Paz & Torchiani (2020) stated that universities did not necessarily see continuous improvement as an advantage. Accreditation standards only focused on compliance, without encouraging improvements, which turned evaluators into reality checkers rather than evaluators of the impact of the actions implemented by the university (p. 147).

Quiroga (2020) stated that the Heads of Career (JC) investigate the challenges and opportunities to implement the Improvement Plan (PM) post-accreditation, and how these processes improve the training of future professionals. The results indicate that the implementation of the PM is a problem for the JC, since it generates a duality between management and research that prevents the creation of a critical mass of professionals with a shared sense of the role of management tools and research in teacher training (p. 29). For their part, Carballo & Ruiz (2022) argued that evaluation and accreditation promote the improvement of institutions and programs in higher education. The evolution of accreditation is based on definitions, indicators and evaluative procedures to ensure quality in our institutions and programs in the short, medium and long term. This evolution is the main objective of our work (p. 1).

Ferreiro et al. (2023) stated that the objective was to analyze and compare standards required by international accreditation bodies for university programs. Six key indicators are established and evaluated in academic programs to increase the competitiveness and

prestige of institutions through activities focused on their compliance. Each area may have specific challenges that affect compliance with the evaluators' criteria. They can be adapted to the specific requirements of each area, which facilitates the design of customized strategies to meet those requirements through continuous improvement (p. 1).

Methodology

The type of research was quantitative in approach; since collection techniques will be used, as well as data analysis to clarify those research questions or in any case reveal new questions in the interpretation process, the research design was non-experimental, cross-sectional, descriptive and explanatory. Likewise, for this scientific article, members of the university community of the UTB were taken as population, who were selected through the non-probabilistic criterion: convenience sampling in which university authorities, teachers, students and employees were counted, making a total of 100 members of the community and that by the census sample criterion the entire selected population is taken. In addition, the university management was taken as an independent variable and the accreditation processes as a dependent variable, the data collection technique used was the survey and the instrument used was the questionnaire, which was validated by experts and had a reliability of Cronbach's alpha = 0.938 evidencing a high level of reliability.

Discussion

Figure 1

The guidelines issued by the university management authority are appropriate for the accreditation process

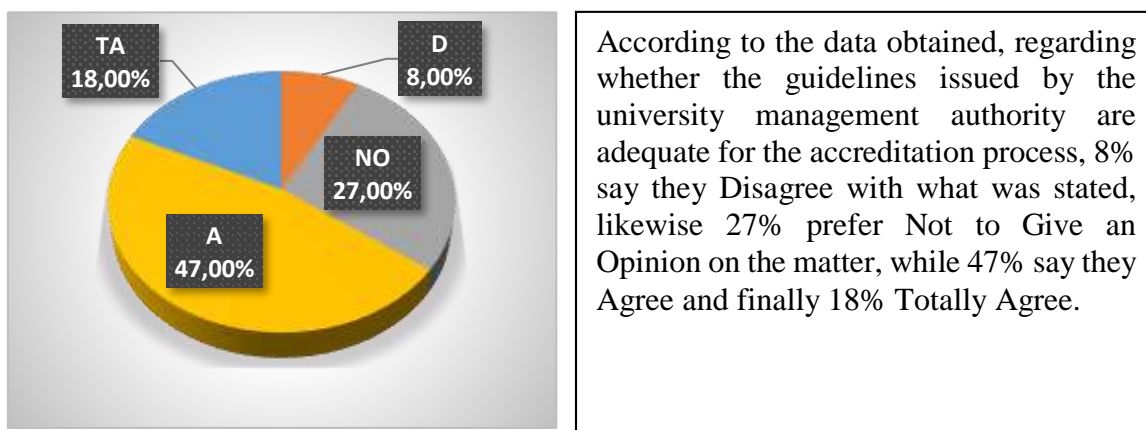


Figure 2

Current university governance processes respond to institutional development for accreditation purposes

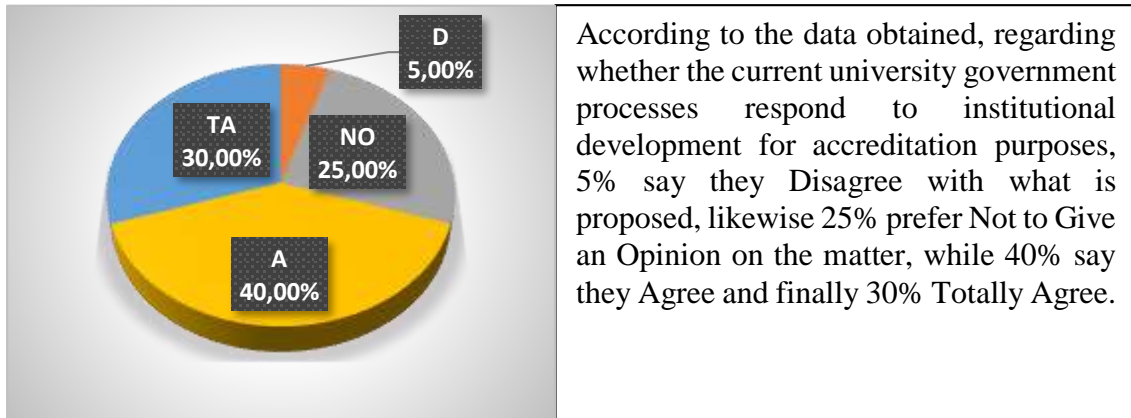


Figure 3

The improvement plan that the institution has been developing allows it to achieve accreditation

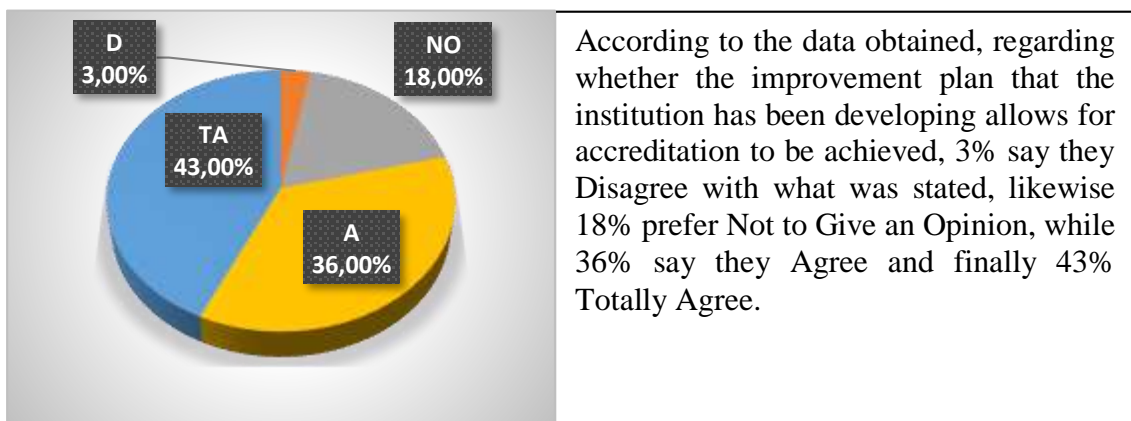
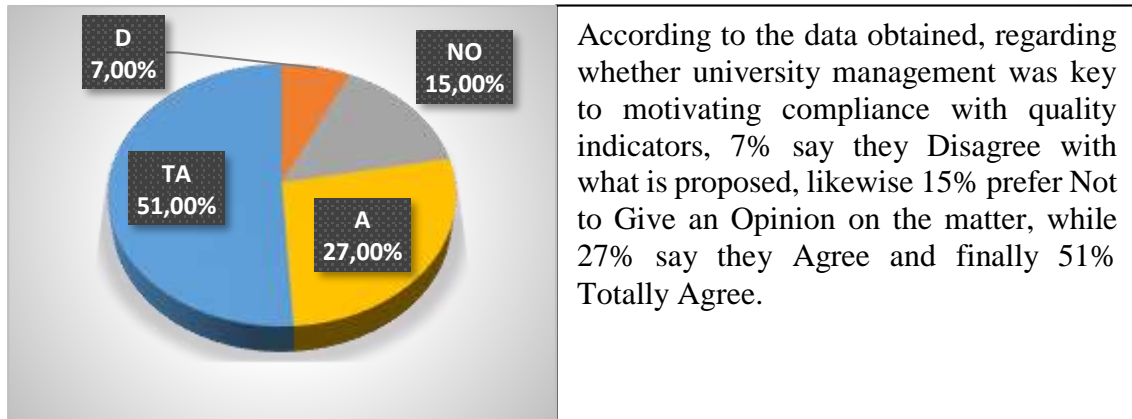


Figure 4

University management was key to motivating compliance with quality indicators



Inferential Tests

Chi Square Test (Independence of Variables)

Table 1

Chi-square tests

	Worth	df	Asymptotic significance (bilateral)
Pearson Chi-square	129,077a	4	,000
Likelihood ratio	139,335	4	,000

Table 1

Chi-square tests (continued)

	Worth	df	Asymptotic significance (bilateral)
Linear by linear association	84,577	1	,000
N of valid cases	100		

a. 5 boxes (55.6%) have expected a count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .40.

Interpretation: Since the p value (asymptotic significance) is less than 0.05, it is accepted that the variables are not independent (there is a relationship between them).

Correlation test between variables

Table 2

Correlation between the variables University Management vs. Accreditation Processes at the Technical University of Babahoyo 2023

Spearman's Rho correlation			
V. Independent	V. Dependent	Correlation coefficient	
University management	Accreditation Processes	Next (bilateral)	0.000
		N	100

In Table 2, it is evident that the variable University Management has a high positive relationship with the variable Accreditation Processes ($Rho=.890^{**}$), which allows us to establish that better university management means better accreditation processes, while weak university management means inefficient accreditation processes.

Table 3

Comparative table of compliance with Standards in the Accreditation process of 2019 and the Improvement Plan for Accreditation 2023 at the Technical University of Babahoyo

Scale	UTB Institutional Evaluation			
	Year 2019		Year 2023	
	Standards	%	Standards	%
Satisfactory Compliance	1	5%	18	90%
Approach to Compliance	0	0%	0	0%

Table 3

Comparative table of compliance with Standards in the Accreditation process of 2019 and the Improvement Plan for Accreditation 2023 at the Technical University of Babahoyo (continued)

Scale	UTB Institutional Evaluation			
	Year 2019		Year 2023	
	Standards	%	Standards	%
Partial Compliance	13	65%	20	10%
Insufficient compliance	3	15%	0	0%
Breach	3	15%	0	0%
Total	20	100%	20	100%

Table 3 shows that current university management has had a significant influence on the processes aimed at obtaining institutional accreditation, since the decisive action of the university authority allowed the involvement of the university community in general, who from having had an institutional evaluation of 5% in 2019, to date (October - 2023) have managed to advance up to 90% of satisfactory compliance with the evaluation processes, a fact that allows requesting the corresponding institutional recognition and accreditation.

Conclusions

This research concludes the following:

- That the level of relationship between university management and accreditation processes is high, which is corroborated by a Spearman's Rho correlation coefficient of 0.890, which establishes that, the better the university management, the better the accreditation processes.
- Likewise, it has been possible to identify that the activities of university management are working in a coordinated manner, since there is adequate planning and processes that are executed within the parameters of both administrative and academic work.
- The current self-assessment processes have strictly adhered to those established by CACES and there has been permanent communication with them in order to have the pertinent guidelines that were also always generating the evaluative dynamics to correct unintentional errors.
- Factors that strengthen accreditation processes were identified and it was observed that the decisive action of the university authority played a transcendental role in the generation of institutional identity, which led to the decisive commitment of the university community to comply with the specific requirements in the generation of evidence.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

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