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Original article

Musical training in Artistic Education in Cuba. Comparative study

Formación musical en la Enseñanza Artística en Cuba. Estudio comparativo

Formação musical em Educação Artística em Cuba. Estudo comparativo

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ABSTRACT

Based on the few references on the particularities of musical training in Artistic Education in Cuba within the international panorama, this work was developed, with the objective of exposing results of the comparative study of this with other regions of the world. To do this, the comparative method was applied, with certain selection criteria, and parameters for comparison were determined. Additionally, the following were used: bibliographic review, systematization and triangulation of data, from which the characterization of musical training in Cuba, the regions of Europe and Latin America was obtained. These results showed the diversity that exists in the implementation of specialized music teaching due to the dissimilar educational-musical policies and criteria of governments, as well as teachers and directors of educational institutions. The main conclusions reached typified the professional training of music in Cuba, in terms of structural and organizational, which differentiates it from the practices implemented in other nations; as well as the similarities, strengths and insufficiencies to take into account for its improvement.

Keywords: Latin America; Cuba; training; music; European Union.

RESUMEN

Basado en las escasas referencias sobre las particularidades de la formación musical en la Enseñanza Artística en Cuba dentro del panorama internacional, se desarrolló este trabajo, con el objetivo de exponer resultados del estudio comparativo de esta con otras regiones del mundo. Para ello, se aplicó el método comparativo, con determinados criterios de selección, y se determinaron parámetros para la comparación. Se utilizaron, además: la revisión bibliográfica, la sistematización y la triangulación de datos, de donde se obtuvo la caracterización de la formación musical en Cuba, las regiones de Europa y América Latina. Estos resultados mostraron la diversidad que existe en

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la implementación de la enseñanza especializada de la música debido a las disímiles políticas y criterios educativo-musicales de los gobiernos, así como de los profesores y directivos de las instituciones educativas. Las principales conclusiones arribadas tipificaron la formación profesional de la música en Cuba, en cuanto a lo estructural y organizativo, que la diferencia de las prácticas implementadas en otras naciones; así como las similitudes, fortalezas e insuficiencias a tener en cuenta para su perfeccionamiento.

Palabras clave: América Latina; Cuba; formación; música; Unión Europea.

RESUMO

Com base nas poucas referências sobre as particularidades da formação musical na Educação Artística em Cuba no panorama internacional, este trabalho foi desenvolvido, com o objetivo de expor resultados do estudo comparativo desta com outras regiões do mundo. Para isso, aplicou-se o método comparativo, com determinados critérios de seleção, e determinaram-se parâmetros de comparação. Adicionalmente, foram utilizados: revisão bibliográfica, sistematização e triangulação de dados, dos quais se obteve a caracterização da formação musical em Cuba, nas regiões da Europa e da América Latina. Esses resultados mostraram a diversidade existente na implementação do ensino especializado de música devido às políticas e critérios educativo-musicais díspares dos governos, bem como dos professores e diretores das instituições de ensino. As principais conclusões alcançadas tipificam a formação profissional da música em Cuba, em termos de aspectos estruturais e organizacionais, que a diferenciam das práticas implementadas em outras nações; bem como as semelhanças, pontos fortes e insuficiências a ter em conta para a sua melhoria.

Palavras-chave: América Latina; Cuba; treinamento; música; União Europeia.

INTRODUCTION

Musical training in Cuba has an artistic-pedagogical legacy manifest in the work of music professionals, in their performances as performers and teachers, who contributed to the development of this education. Between the 16th and 19th centuries, private teachers, academies and conservatories set standards in musical training progress. In the first half of the 20th century, techniques, methodologies and curricula denoted the educational practice of numerous specialized centers. This projection led, in 1959, to the triumph of the Revolution, the revolutionary government, together with prominent musician-pedagogues, to organize and structure this teaching-learning process as part of Cuban Artistic Education.

The conception of training responds to the cause-effect relationship, given in a particular way in the pedagogical process, and involves the construction and reconstruction of personal and professional knowledge (Grijalba Vallejo and Mendoza Otero, 2020). It is related to education and schooling, where there are specific objectives to achieve, evaluation mechanisms, certification, and it occurs in the school space, with a transformative nature (Lozano Andrade, 2014). As a consequence, musical training in the school context is the educational process that takes music as a means to train the human being. The theoretical and practical contents that comprise it are collected in curricular documents, such as: study plans and subject programs, fundamentally enabling the development of education for life and, in particular, vocational training.

This study assumes and updates the conception of musical training in Cuba presented by Sánchez Ortega (2017), as it constitutes an indispensable foundation for the area of knowledge in question and for the research purposes. It consists of the existence of two lines with marked differences, but with a close interrelation: mass musical education and specialized musical education.

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The first refers to the education of the public, present in all educational subsystems of the general school and in other segments of society. The professional training of middle-level teachers for mass music education is carried out in the Pedagogical Schools, guided by the Ministry of Education (MINED) and the Higher Level by the Ministry of Higher Education (MES).

The second line is aimed at the training of music professionals in performances as performers, choir or orchestra directors, researchers, musicologists, sound engineers, among others; those who require specialized training. It occurs in Artistic Education, subordinated to the Ministry of Culture (MINCULT), the Ministry of Education (MINED) in its link with the subsystems of Primary, Basic Secondary, and Technical Education and Professional and the corresponding training of the Ministry of Higher Education (MES).

The dialectical interrelation given in the communicative process between specialized musical education and mass musical education contributes to the training of students in both lines of work. In training practices, music students collaborate with the education of audiences; these, in turn, in the different school and extracurricular spaces, help the development of the performance modes of future professional musicians.

Based on these references, and given the conceptual insufficiencies found in the texts and documents of Cuban Artistic Education, operational definitions necessary for the development of the research are developed. For this, existing studies before and after 1959, up to the present, were taken into account; in addition to the characteristics, functions and descriptions of the processes that comprise it.

Firstly, Artistic Education is defined as the educational system that trains art professionals in Cuba, the result of a historical evolution, founded on educational, economic, social and cultural policies of government, structured and organized by the development of artistic-

pedagogical thought. As a consequence, the musical training given in this teaching is the educational process that provides human beings with the knowledge, attitudes, values and abilities that form them as a music professional in their different areas of performance, taught in specialized schools and universities in the contexts of Primary, Basic Secondary, Technical and Professional Education and Higher Education, where various training processes are developed at the Elementary, Higher Secondary Professional and Higher levels, respectively, from an artistic-pedagogical approach.

The research carried out on musical training in Artistic Education is fundamentally theses for bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees, mostly unpublished, which present solutions to problems of training practice, based on artistic-pedagogical, social and cultural needs. In addition, they address historical-logical studies on different musical specializations, subjects, training processes and the approach to curricular, methodological and teaching improvement proposals.

The characteristics and descriptions found in research on the musical training of Artistic Education in Cuba focus the studies on the national context with insufficient analysis of the particularities within the international panorama, being an aspect of great importance for the diagnosis of strengths and weaknesses, with a view to transformations and improvements, as well as background and foundations for carrying out other scientific investigations. Therefore, this article aims to present results of the comparative study carried out between the musical training of Artistic Education in Cuba and that of other regions of the world.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The comparative method was applied as a procedure for analyzing study objects and musical training in Artistic Education in Cuba was determined as the object of comparison. The

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countries of the European Union and Latin America were assumed as a sample, making use of methodological relationships that allowed the analysis, synthesis, induction and deduction of similarities and differences between object and sample in qualitative research.

The implementation of musical training was established as the scope of study of the object, where the operation was considered, according to the sociocultural characteristics in which it is developed, given in a heterogeneous context due to the diversity of countries it integrates; furthermore, it occurred in a time of synchronous comparison, since it is established in the same temporal space of a supra-state nature, defined by the international places it covers: the countries of the European Union and Latin America.

For the development of the study, distinctive elements of the musical training process were identified, which were assumed as parameters to be compared. These were:

1. Government foundations for the development of musical training
2. Educational institutions for musical training
3. Training levels
4. Articulation between training levels
5. Study plan
6. Entry to vocational training

With these parameters, an extensive bibliographic review was carried out, where information on the development of musical training in the regions studied was systematized. Firstly, the characterization of musical training in Cuba was presented, followed by those in countries of the European Union and Latin America. Consequently, to fulfill the objective of the research, the triangulation of the data obtained was carried out and the object was compared in relation to the international references of the study.

RESULTS

Musical training in Artistic Education in Cuba

Musical training in Artistic Education in Cuba, since the beginning of the revolutionary stage, was governed by government institutions in charge of its development, in conjunction with the other manifestations of art. Among these was the National Council of Culture (CNC), founded on January 4, 1961; Later, in 1976, the Ministry of Culture (MINCULT) was created, with a Directorate of Artistic Education (DEA) that replaced the CNC and in 1989 the National Center for Art Schools (CNEArt) was formed, still in force.

The CNEArt directs, guides and controls the development of the training processes of Artistic Education throughout the nation, including music, where specialized training and general training are taught jointly. Although it belongs to MINCULT, it responds to the educational policies of the Ministry of Education (MINED). It offers free and accessible education to children from all over the country, with aptitudes for the study of music, without distinctions.

Regarding musical training in Higher Education, in 1976 the Higher Institute of Art (ISA), current University of the Arts, was established, subordinate to the Ministry of Higher Education (MES). From there music professionals graduate with a high level of preparation.

Musical training has been carried out in art schools and centers governed by the CNEArt, organized in a broad institutional network, which is part of the country's cultural and educational policy. Music, due to the number of specializations, as well as the subjects and number of years of study, is the specialty with the greatest presence in these institutions. For its part, the University of the Arts currently has a Faculty of Music and branches in the provinces of Camagüey, Holguín and Santiago de Cuba.

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Musical training was structured into three training levels, existing to this day:

- Elementary level: for children between 7/8 and 14/15 years of age, where they receive different musical specializations in seven years of long courses and five years of short courses. This is linked to the Primary and Basic Secondary Education Subsystems as general training of the MINED. It happens in the art schools run by CNEArt, which exist in all the provinces of the country.
- Upper secondary level: it takes place in four years of studies and is linked to the Technical and Professional Education subsystem of the MINED. It is developed in art schools that have a Medium Level, present in certain provinces of the country where conditions exist for its implementation.
- Higher level: it is carried out at the University of the Arts, with its Faculty of Music, in and the branches already mentioned in the provinces of the country. The years of study at this training level vary, depending on the profile, between four or five years.

These three levels are articulated through dependency relationships between one another, where the contents of the training processes are developed in a systemic way. At each level the studies carried out in the previous levels are deepened. The elementary level is the basis for training; This teaches the techniques of each musical instrument, reading and musical appreciation basically for interpretation. At the intermediate level, you reach a more complete knowledge of what was covered in the previous level and delve into other subjects such as harmony, analysis, counterpoint, among others. At the Higher Level, more specialized studies are taught, obtaining greater excellence in interpretation, creation, research and, in general, analytical thinking about music.

Each of the levels has study plans applied equally throughout the country. At the elementary level,

they are addressed in long courses with seven years of study and short courses with five years. The first are the Piano, Violin, Viola and Cello specializations. The second are the specializations of: Double Bass, Guitar, Tres, Lute, Flute, Oboe, Clarinet, Saxophone, Bassoon, Trumpet, Trombone, French Horn, Percussion and Choral Singing. It includes as subjects: Musical Initiation, Music Theory, Musical Appreciation, Music Theory, Ensemble Practice, Complementary Piano and Choir.

At the Intermediate Level, these specializations are added to Electric Bass, Electric Guitar, Theoretical Subjects, Euphonium, Tuba, Choral Conducting, Choral Singing and Accompanying Pianist. As for the subjects, they include: Harmony, Counterpoint, Analysis, History of Universal Music and History of Cuban and Latin American Music, among others. In teacher training, Psychology, Pedagogy and Teaching Methodology are taught.

At the Higher Level, other specializations appear such as: Musicology, Orchestral Conducting and Sound Engineering, profiles accompanied by specific subjects that complete their knowledge.

At the end of the Elementary Level, students take level passing exams, where they demonstrate the theoretical-practical knowledge, abilities and skills acquired in a specific musical instrument, which condition them for continuing their studies. This initial level does not issue a graduate degree. At the Intermediate Level is where vocational training occurs; Upon completion, the student receives the qualification that accredits him fundamentally as a performer and teacher. The Higher Level is optional. In this the musician has the possibility of accessing the deepening and perfecting of musical knowledge by taking an entrance exam; Upon completion, the professional training cycle ends upon graduating from Higher Education and receives the corresponding diploma.

The center of higher education itself offers its graduates, music professionals, options for

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postgraduate training, among which the master's and doctoral modalities stand out. In addition, at the "Enrique José Varona" Pedagogical University, studies are offered for those musicians who wish to perfect themselves as teachers.

Musical training in countries of the European Union

In Europe, each country is responsible for the educational system it employs; This includes the implementation of music education where there are various models and methodologies. Some countries have national laws for this type of teaching, as is the case of Spain, with regulated and non-regulated music schools.

In the European panorama there is a great diversity of musical educational institutions prior to the Higher Level, with different names, these are:

1. General music schools: They operate outside the compulsory educational system. They are independent schools that offer music education to students of all ages and levels; funded by both the government and private music schools. In Spain they are shown in the Music School model.
2. Specialized music schools: They operate outside the compulsory educational system. They are independent music education schools where a special curriculum is implemented that prepares students to access future professional training. Also, in Spain these schools are represented by the Elementary and Professional Conservatories.
3. Compulsory secondary education institutions with specialization in music A: They are secondary schools that provide general education with a specialization in music education. Examples include the Musikgymnasia of Germany and the integrated centers of Spain.
4. Compulsory secondary education institutions with specialization in music B:

They are secondary schools that provide musical education at an advanced level, combined with general education. The conservatories of the Czech Republic are shown as examples.

5. Compulsory secondary education institutions with specialization in music C: These are secondary schools that offer music education at an advanced level, without the inclusion of general education.
6. The junior departments of the higher centers: Some Higher Education institutions, with musical education, offer preparatory classes to students to access musical studies in those same centers.
7. Tutorials.

There is also professional training at the Higher Level in the conservatories or faculties of music and arts of the universities of all the countries of the European Union, which also include master's and doctoral programs.

initial or elementary and intermediate levels, called *precollege*, is recognized, although this specialized training is not guaranteed in all countries. For its part, the Higher Level does have a structural and curricular organization consistent with professional training.

The articulation between the *pre-college levels* is insufficient for the demands of vocational training at the Higher Level. In relation to the study plans, they are diverse, depending on the training models of the institutions and the educational policies of each country.

On this point, in general, secondary schools and junior departments play an important role in musical education prior to higher education. The latter, in countries with high development in musical education, such as Germany, Austria and Hungary, Higher Level institutions do not implement it because the preparation that students receive at lower educational levels is reliable. However, in other countries where music schools focus on musical education for amateurs and amateurs, without professional

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aspirations, there is a greater number of these in the Conservatories and Music Faculties of the Universities.

Integrated Centers, such as Musikgymnasia in Germany, conservatories in the Czech Republic and in Spain, combine music education with general education effectively. Some function as boarding schools. They are mostly secondary education institutions with a specialization in music, affiliated with higher musical education institutions. The musical training they provide is advanced. Upon completing their studies at these centers, students receive a qualification that allows them to continue professional musical training in higher education or access other areas of study.

In southern Europe there are countries like France, which have a system of regional conservatories, with institutions that provide musical education from the initial level to the professional level within their continuous training program. In the initial stages, students receive musical training along with primary and secondary general training.

In other countries such as Denmark, systems developed with the collaborative effort of music schools, higher education institutions and local governments are applied. In some Central European countries, students attend specialized music education institutions of a high professional level, but they do not have higher status, so they operate at a secondary level. The advantage of these is that they offer a clear continuity between secondary and higher education.

The entrance exams to Higher Education present similarities in all the countries of the European Union. Auditions are held where, among others, theoretical-practical and interpretive knowledge is evaluated; Applicants are interviewed and foreign students are admitted, as long as they master the language, giving the option of sending a CD or video demonstrating mastery of their instrument or voice, through a selected repertoire. As general requirements, applicants

must present a high school diploma and meet the age limit, both minimum and maximum, determined by the institution.

From the studies developed by the European Union on music education in the region, characteristics emerge to be taken into account for the implementation of a good music teaching system. These are:

- Beginning of musical studies at an early age, especially for those who intend to be music professionals.
- Conception of musical training as a continuous process that spans from the initial years and can continue throughout life. In this process, the *precollege stage* is decisive for musical education.
- In the *pre-college stage* (elementary and middle stages) musical education must be structured in such a way that it forms the skills of students to begin higher education.
- Close relationships and links between the institutions that provide musical training, between the different training levels and the implementation of a continuous curriculum.
- The admission processes of higher institutions must be consciously related and compatible with the learning outcomes of the first and second cycle of higher education.
- The study of music is a right of every citizen and not a privilege reserved for a few individuals gifted with a "special" talent. Therefore, the stage of musical education prior to higher level should be considered very valuable for the training of amateur musicians.

Musical training in Latin American countries

In Latin America the reports found on musical training are also diverse. The government's rationale for development resembles that of Europe; Music education is implemented according to the existing education laws in each country. Furthermore, in general, Eurocentric

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conceptions prevail when using Jesuit, conservatorial and aesthetic-formalist educational models (Figure 1), where the music of the Latin American region is inserted into the curricula with the precepts of the European canon.



Fig. 1- Eurocentric conceptions of educational models in Latin America

Despite this, some countries such as Argentina, Chile and Uruguay stand out for having solid musical training in the context of school-based musical education, dependent on the Ministries of Public Education. In others like Mexico, although musical education is contemplated within the public and private education systems, it is not assumed with the importance and value it has for the education of human beings.

The educational institutions for musical training that exist throughout the Latin American region are schools, conservatories, academies and specialized training centers. In addition, there are projects such as the National System of Children's Orchestras and Choirs of the "Simón Bolívar" Musical Foundation of Venezuela that, although they lack a curricular structure, have developed musical training with notable achievements. Initially, it was conceived as a social rescue program for children from vulnerable sectors or risk situations, but it has constituted a transformation for students, families, society and culture.

For its part, the delimitation into levels has various names, according to the practice of each country. However, in general it is structured into initial, intermediate and bachelor's degrees with

higher education and the respective postgraduate training.

In Argentina, for example, there are Music Schools in the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires, public institutions for the vocational teaching of music aimed at boys and girls from four years of age, and pre-adolescents, paid for by the state, where They provide musical training that deepens the knowledge taught in compulsory general education. Students from these schools generally continue studies at other secondary and university level institutions to complete their professional training; Therefore, these constitute the beginning of specific training.

Although there are countries with a solid musical education within general education, with adequate relationships between levels from which the beginnings of specialized training come, in the vast majority of the region the articulation between these is insufficient.

The study plans depend on the political and pedagogical foundations, both of the governments and the directives of the different training centers. Hence their conceptions are diverse, even within the same nation. There are experiences where musical training is directly linked to general training and in others they are developed in specialized educational-musical institutions.

In Mexico, although study plans are implemented in each educational institution and professional musicians work as teachers formally or informally, the methodologies they apply come from other countries such as Germany, Brazil, Cuba, Spain, the United States of America, France, England, Japan, Russia, Venezuela, among others.

Vocational training takes place in Higher Level centers. It is accessed through admission exams. Some universities develop preparatory courses, also called preparatory courses, with the purpose of filling the educational gaps that exist among students before starting higher studies.

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In this section it is valid to recognize the Creative Colombia project of the Ministry of Culture of said country, which proposes to expand access to Higher Education in art, with special emphasis on the training of students from regions where education programs are scarce or do not exist. superior in music. In addition, professionalize those musicians over 30 years old who do not have a university degree, but who have an outstanding career.

DISCUSSION

The study is based on the criteria of Nohlen (2020), Gómez Díaz de León and de León de la Garza (2014) and González Falcón and Collazo Salcedo (2019) on the comparative method, which contribute to the understanding of unknown elements from of those known, with explanations and interpretations. It provides new knowledge, identifies the particularities of what is known, systematizes the differences and favors the study of the relationship between society, educational policies and educational systems from diversity, unity, integration, social cohesion and contextualization. All this emerges as a result of the bibliographic review (Table 1).

Table 1- Results of the bibliographic review

| Sources consulted | Amount | From the last five years | Selected | % of total selected |
|--|--------------|--------------------------|----------|---------------------|
| Books | Electronic | 3 | 2 | |
| | Printed | 1 | 1 | 6.66% |
| | Book chapter | 4 | 4 | 26.66% |
| Articles in electronic journals | 40 | 32 | 9 | 60% |
| Documents of academic events with ISSN or ISBN | 3 | 1 | 1 | 6.66% |
| Totals | 51 | 37 | 16 | 100% |

The authors selected for the study of each of the regions in question are those who within their texts offer data in correspondence with the comparison parameters. In Cuba, the main one chosen is Sánchez Ortega (2017, 2024), for the deep analyzes of musical education that she

carries out in her research. To characterize musical training in the European Union, the writings of Roa Venegas and Ruiz Fernández (2020), Domínguez Lloria and Pino Juste (2020) and Zubeldia Echeberria (2017) are used. For its part, from Latin America the notes by Jorquera *et al. are valuable.* (2020), Navarro Solís (2021), Morán Quiroz and Ruelas Jara (2021), García and Samaja (2018) and Tobo Mendivelso and Rodríguez Benavides (2023).

In the texts consulted, in general, it can be seen that on the international scene musical training is inherent to musical education and occurs in general or school education, non-formal education, teacher training and professional training (Figure 2). The latter corresponds to that developed by Cuban Artistic Education; hence the comparative study focuses only on said process and its modes of application in the selected regions.



Fig. 2- Areas of development of musical training in the international context

Musical training in Artistic Education in Cuba, in relation to the countries of the European Union and Latin America, has a specialized system based on educational and government policies, presided over by a governing center. While some countries have specific laws for music schools and others depend on general ordinances on education, Cuban practice has an institutional organizational structure that regulates teaching throughout the country.

The various names of musical training institutions, both in Europe and Latin America, correspond to the training levels presented by

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each of the countries. The models are varied in each nation; There are public and private schools and musical centers, conservatories and universities, among others. On the other hand, the Cuban conception is a public educational system that has the art school model, which includes levels prior to Higher Education and a national university with branches in certain provinces of the country.

In general terms, in each of the regions studied and in Cuba there are three training levels. The third constitutes Higher Education, where postgraduate training also occurs. In the Cuban experience, the articulation between these occurs in continuous training with adequate organizational and structural relationships; Similarly, it happens in specific models of countries such as: France, Argentina, Chile and Uruguay. However, it is mostly insufficient for university educational demands.

The study plans depend on the educational-musical conceptions of the different training centers. In the same country there are several models. In Cuba, a national study plan is implemented for each level of musical training, with a continuous structure and organization that is completed upon completion of the Higher Level, giving the character of a system to Artistic Education. For its part, the European Union advocates the creation of a national study plan for each of the countries, where adequate relationships are achieved between the different educational-musical institutions and between *pre-college* and higher levels.

Admission to vocational training, in all cases, occurs through an admission exam. However, only in Cuba does this training occur from the Intermediate Level. In the rest of the countries, they take place in Higher Education and in many others the universities implement preparatory courses to level the knowledge of the applicants, due to deficiencies in the articulation of the previous levels.

Cuban musical training corresponds to the characteristics for a good music teaching

system, presented by the European Union. Among these, the beginning of studies at an early age for those who wish to be musicians, training as a continuous process and the articulation between the levels: Elementary, Middle and Higher. As strengths is the public and free nature of the training. One of the elements to perfect is the qualification at the Elementary Level.

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The author participated in the design and writing of the article, in the search and analysis of the information contained in the consulted bibliography.

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