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Participatory management for successful learning in higher education institutions

Gestión participativa para el aprendizaje exitoso en las instituciones de educación superior

Gestão participativa para um aprendizado bem-sucedido em instituições de ensino superior

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ABSTRACT

The world is constantly changing, making Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) increasingly dynamic scenarios, facing permanent challenges. According to UNESCO, higher education is positioned as the central axis to respond to these challenges. Therefore, promoting participatory management that facilitates the transition from transformational learning to higher learning, as a current paradigm shift at an international level, is a challenge that traces the path to follow for university communities. In this sense, the purpose of this article is to socialize a proposal on the paradigm shift of learning in universities at a global level, highlighting participation as an indispensable principle to achieve it. The study was based on an analysis that used the historical-logical method and analysis-synthesis as fundamental procedures. From this, a reflection was made on participatory management to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of higher learning. The main results show the need and importance of implementing participatory management in Higher Education Institutions to enhance their transformational learning.

Keywords: transformational learning; quality; process; direction; participatory management.

RESUMEN

El mundo está en constante movimiento, lo que convierte a las Instituciones de Educación Superior (IES) en escenarios cada vez más dinámicos, enfrentándolas a desafíos permanentes. Según la UNESCO, la educación superior se posiciona como el eje central para responder a estos retos. Por ello, promover una gestión participativa que facilite la transición del aprendizaje transformacional hacia el aprendizaje superior, como un cambio de paradigma actual a nivel internacional, es un desafío que traza el camino a seguir para las comunidades universitarias. En este sentido, el propósito de este artículo es socializar una

propuesta sobre el cambio de paradigma del aprendizaje en las universidades a nivel global, destacando la participación como un principio indispensable para lograrlo. El estudio se basó en un análisis que utilizó el método histórico-lógico y el análisis-síntesis como procedimientos fundamentales. A partir de ello, se reflexionó sobre la gestión participativa para mejorar la eficiencia y la eficacia del aprendizaje superior. Los principales resultados evidencian la necesidad y la importancia de implementar una gestión participativa en las Instituciones de Educación Superior para potenciar su aprendizaje transformacional.

Palabras clave: aprendizaje transformacional; calidad; proceso; dirección; gestión participativa.

RESUMO

O mundo está em constante movimento, o que transforma as Instituições de Ensino Superior (IES) em cenários cada vez mais dinâmicos, confrontando-as com desafios permanentes. De acordo com a UNESCO, o ensino superior se posiciona como eixo central para responder a esses desafios. Portanto, promover uma gestão participativa que facilite a transição da aprendizagem transformacional para a aprendizagem superior, como uma mudança de paradigma atual em nível internacional, é um desafio que traça o caminho a ser seguido pelas comunidades universitárias. Nesse sentido, o objetivo deste artigo é socializar uma proposta sobre a mudança de paradigma da aprendizagem nas universidades em nível global, destacando a participação como um princípio indispensável para alcançá-la. O estudo foi baseado em uma análise que utilizou o método histórico-lógico e a análise-síntese como procedimentos fundamentais. A partir disso, refletiu-se sobre a gestão participativa para melhorar a eficiência e a eficácia do ensino superior. Os principais resultados mostram a necessidade e a importância da implementação da gestão participativa nas instituições de ensino

superior para aprimorar sua aprendizagem transformacional.

Palavras-chave: aprendizagem transformacional; qualidade; processo; direção; gestão participativa.

INTRODUCTION

The international context in which nations develop establishes a high societal paradigm for Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). In this sense, international organizations have analyzed the urgency of advocating for a multipolar world that contributes to mitigating the multidimensional crisis that hinders the successful fulfillment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) established in the 2030 Agenda for Human and Sustainable Development (HSD).

Understanding these arguments is of vital importance due to the environment in which HEIs develop and interact. From this perspective, it is pertinent to address the 2015 Incheon Declaration and the Framework for Action for the realization of SDG-4, which highlights Higher Education (HE) as a strategic issue for the desired DHS (IESALC-UNESCO, 2018).

Driven by this purpose, the authors of this work have highlighted, through systematized literature, some of the current trends in the educational field, particularly in HEIs. These trends are aimed at the integration of participatory management as a key management concept in the management of the paradigm shift towards learning in constant transformation, oriented towards higher learning in HEIs, capable of facing the challenges and challenges imposed by the dynamics of the macroenvironment:

- a) The scientific-technical revolution
- b) Massification
- c) Internationalization
- d) Globalization
- e) Diversification
- f) E-learning
- g) Mobile devices
- h) Innovation
- i) The change in skills in light of the evolution of career paths according to the demands of employing entities

For such purposes, quality assurance in HEIs and a theoretical reflection on the relevance of participatory management as an advanced conception of management for the success of higher learning are required.

As regards the application of this concept to the educational field, it is observed that its treatment responds to the multiple influences of today's society. This implies satisfying needs of various kinds, which represent a challenge for universities: achieving quality and relevance in the training of professionals capable of facing technological development and other contemporary challenges.

According to Sol Arriaza (2012), participation demands new ways of combining individual interests with the common good and the collective interest. This approach impacts the entire management process, both at local, national and international levels. Teamwork allows people to express needs and opinions, collaborate in decision-making and assume a proactive role. Therefore, participatory management (PM) establishes links between stakeholders, who assume responsibilities in order to improve the environment.

Consequently, the objective of this article is to socialize an approach based on a learning paradigm in universities globally, where participation is an indispensable principle.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

For the analysis presented, it was necessary to use document analysis, reviewing various materials and authors that address the topic of participatory management in Higher Education. Document analysis is a research technique that uses documents as primary sources of information to respond to the stated objective.

Document analysis, in direct relation to the scientific method, adopts among its steps:

1. Observation: Identification of gaps in knowledge, topics of interest or questions that can be answered using documents as sources of information.
2. Data collection: Selection of sources (books, articles, reports, among others) applying inclusion and exclusion criteria for what was reviewed.
3. Searching for information: Using various search techniques in databases, repositories and other sources to locate relevant documents.
4. Review: Analysis of the content of documents to identify patterns, trends and relevant topics, which influence decision-making.

The scientific method contributed to the study by revealing the connection between theory and practice, since the research responds to an objective logic linked to the object of study. The rigor of the method lies in the selection of sources, the methodology of analysis and the interpretation of the results.

RESULTS

The International Summit on Balanced and Inclusive Education, a new organization for educational cooperation, was held in Djibouti City on January 29, 2020, with the aim of promoting higher education that responds in an increasingly contextualized way to the needs of

nations. This event adopted four fundamental pillars of balanced and inclusive education: Intraculturalism, Transdisciplinarity, Dialecticism and Contextuality.

Paying attention to these pillars highlights the importance of higher learning in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), managed from a participatory philosophy that encompasses the internal processes of these institutions. This approach is crucial to understanding their social responsibility as drivers of the knowledge economy, both tacit and explicit.

An overview of the main developments in higher education identifies a number of key trends that must be considered in order to meet current challenges. These trends seek to ensure quality and relevant higher education for all. Among them, participatory management stands out as an advanced conception of management to drive a paradigm shift based on transformational learning that evolves towards higher learning.

These trends are marked by the challenges that HEIs face in the 21st century, which can be explored through the following questions:

- a) What are the main challenges faced by HEIs when designing and delivering quality and relevant tertiary education programs?
- b) What good theories or practices can help solve these problems?
- c) What actions should be taken by different stakeholders to design and deliver relevant, high-quality and sustainable programs for diverse groups of students with different learning needs?

In this context, it is relevant to understand a concept that has been widely discussed in the last decade and acclaimed by scientific communities in countries such as Spain, Japan, India, the United States, Cuba and Venezuela: Participatory Management in HEIs.

The development of knowledge on management theories since the beginning of the 20th century,

advances in technology and information, as well as the challenges faced by universities in Latin America and the Caribbean, have generated the need to implement increasingly flexible and dynamic management approaches that manage to engage and involve university communities in the quality management of the processes that take place in HEIs, particularly the learning and management process.

It is worth asking then, what can be understood by participatory management, conceived as a concept of management, characterized by a high participatory culture in the planning, organization, execution and control of university processes, in decision-making and problem solving, which affects the intellectual development of the university community and allows the social responsibility of HEIs to be fulfilled with quality. There is no doubt that the term participatory management implies assuming the increase of the participation of those involved in the management process of universities and with it greater involvement of the university community in the management of the processes that take place in them.

Starting from this analysis, it is vital to understand that participation in the management process of HEIs is assumed as the process through which the subject actively intervenes in it, as a need for his or her biopsychosocial development and that of the university community in the face of the demands of transformation of the reality in which it interacts, in order to contribute to the fulfillment of the social mission of the institution.

The concepts referred to find a common criterion in the available literature, in which the management of participation for transformational learning towards higher learning becomes a fundamental principle. This criterion is based on pointing out that psychic phenomena are determined by the interaction between man as a subject and the objective world. It is not enough for the outside world to act on the receptors. Active participation of the

subject is necessary for the psychic phenomenon to be produced.

DISCUSSION

Research networks also foster interdisciplinary collaboration by integrating knowledge from different areas to address complex problems from a comprehensive perspective. According to Moreno et al. (2020), these networks promote mutual learning among their members by facilitating the exchange of ideas, experiences and good practices in the generation of knowledge. In addition, they encourage continuous training and the development of skills in the use of new tools and technologies.

Another relevant aspect of research networks is their contribution to strengthening local capacities in the communities where they operate. This is achieved by involving local actors in research projects and by transferring technical and methodological knowledge that contributes to the sustainable development of these communities. For example, Martínez and López (2021) emphasize that collaborative network projects generate practical and applicable solutions to specific problems in the regions, which increases their social and scientific relevance.

Regarding limitations, one of the main challenges facing research networks is long-term financial sustainability. According to Pérez (2020), funding sources are often unstable and dependent on public policies or institutions that do not always keep their commitments. This fact can negatively impact the continuity of projects. Furthermore, effective coordination between network members can be a challenge due to cultural, linguistic and professional expectations differences.

On the other hand, power dynamics within networks can influence the distribution of resources and opportunities, limiting the equal participation of all members. The centralization

of decisions in key actors can generate imbalances in the representativeness and impact of the research carried out. To mitigate these limitations, various authors suggest the implementation of clear governance and transparency mechanisms, as well as the promotion of equal opportunities for all participants (Gómez & Rivera, 2019).

Finally, research networks offer a valuable framework for scientific collaboration in a globalized and digitalized world. While they face significant challenges, their positive impact on advancing knowledge and solving social, economic and environmental problems is indisputable. Fostering these networks, with a focus on equity and sustainability, is essential to maximize their benefits and ensure their continued contribution to human development.

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Conflict of interests:

The authors declare not to have any interest conflicts.

Authors' contribution:

The authors 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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