

Public Management in University Higher Education: A Literature Review

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Article Info	Abstract
<p>Article History</p> <p>Received: June , 2021</p> <p>Accepted: January , 2022</p> <hr/> <p>Keywords : NGP (New Public Management), Higher Education, Governance, Neoliberalism</p> <p>DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.5847479</p>	<p><i>This literature review analyzes the role of the state in higher education under the implementation of the New Public Management (NPM) paradigm proposed as part of neoliberalism.</i></p> <p><i>The implementation of the New Public Management (NPM) paradigm proposed as part of neoliberalism. Some authors defend this paradigm, arguing that it can increase the efficiency, productivity and performance of higher education entities with some indicators such as quality standards established as part of per formative measures and, therefore, foster a more democratic and inclusive governance. In this NGP proposal, the central question always lies in whether the state should play minimum or maximum roles through a set of per formative measures. This article seeks to contribute to a better understanding of the theory and methodology of public administration and public policy in higher education, particularly with regard to the role of the state, where the NGP and the neoliberal agenda are being implemented worldwide and initially in Europe. Making use of a mixed approach, quantitative with the elaboration of some statistics, of the keyword search argument in Scopus and qualitative with the bibliometric analysis,</i></p>

Introduction

In today's world there is no consensus on the efficient approach that should be applied in higher education to improve education in every sense of the word and aimed at achieving the sustainable development goals proposed in the 2030 agenda, with quality education. In this sense, education is a topic of great social interest and therefore it is relevant to address the issue of public management in efficient university higher education and the approaches applied. In the field of higher education, universities seek a balance between legitimacy and efficiency both within and outside their organizational environment (Brunnson, 1996), as cited in (Leisyty y Kizniene, 2006).

Giroux's proposal is based on the concern that neoliberal ideas, in this case New Public Management (NPM), promote business principles in higher education through corporate language such as competition, profitability, quality assurance, monitoring, evaluation, auditing and accountability. "These lexicons have, to some extent, changed the terrain of higher education as a democratic sphere that promotes democratic values, citizenship, and the common or public good, the same values that have been promoted by liberalism and democratic theory (Abizadeh, 2008; Giroux, 2002; Thompson y Miller, 2003)"(Gaus, 2019,p 295).

The role of the state in higher education under the implementation of the New Public Management (NPM) advocated by neoliberal ideology argues that it can increase success and productivity and thus foster more democratic governance. In this set of NPM-driven proposals, the central question always lies in whether the state should play minimal or maximal roles through a set of per formative measures.(Gaus, 2019, p. 294).

The quality assurance of university higher education is nowadays one of the great problems of the state and as part of the solution, some public policies are being developed and implemented to improve the management of the resources of these study centers. One of these policies is the normative and functional modification of public universities, in order to guarantee quality education as mentioned above.

In the context of financing, there are budgetary restrictions; over time, governments have been reducing spending on HE and have increasingly introduced the market as a new coordination and financing mechanism (Middlehurst & Teixeira, 2012). Other management principles, such as liberalization and privatization, are also part of HE governance in many countries (de Boer, Enders, & Jongbloed, 2009;Broucker & De Wit, 2013). In general terms, it could be said that the principles of NPM have been introduced to a large extent in HE systems (de Boer et al., 2008;Bleiklie & Michelsen, 2013). However, the principles of NPM are not applied in all sectors of HE in the same way (Broucker & De Wit, 2013; Paradeise, 2012;Eurydice, 2008). Since the motives for reform and the understanding of the NGP differ, implementation and results also differ, as a product of different realities and cultures(Broucker, De Wit, and Verhoeven 2018).

Over the years, history has shown us that education is a key factor for the development of a nation, as many theorists in the field of sustainable development have argued ("La teoria del Capital Humano" de Gary Becker)

to cite an example. Therefore, the NGP aims to efficiently manage public resources in university higher education, where one of the problems is its financing, since in most Latin American countries the budget allocated to higher education is reduced to meet the needs of the student population, faculty and administrative staff. Since then, much research has been done on different factors (efficient management of resources) that affect and determine a quality education that contributes to economic development and the welfare state. (Zhu et al., 2017).

The research pursues the purpose of analyzing the state of the art by reviewing the theoretical and methodological development of other research related to "Public management in university higher education". Therefore, the importance of the research lies in the fact that it will serve as a guide for other researchers who are interested in knowing some factors that relate efficient management with the quality of higher education. This document has the following structure. In the first part, a review of the literature is made to know some approaches and observe some results obtained by other researchers that relate the efficient management of resources with educational quality, in the second section the method used to support the study is detailed, then the results will be made evident and finally the results are discussed, which allow conclusions to be drawn.

METHODOLOGY

The research has been developed in two stages. The first stage consists of a bibliometric analysis of "Public management in higher education" and the second stage is an analytical review of the most relevant literature on public management and its scope to date in relation to higher education.

Bibliometrics is the application of mathematical and statistical fundamentals to written sources found in databases containing metadata and elements such as authors, title of publication, type of document, language, abstract and keywords or descriptors (López et al., 2009). This methodology is being used more and more frequently to analyze the state of the art of the phenomena being investigated, thus making it possible to know the categories of analysis in which authors abound, the areas of knowledge interested in the subject, relevant authors, countries, types of publication and institutional affiliations of the authors, journals, etc.

The conjunction between the areas of knowledge, the different theoretical approaches and the axes provide inputs for the construction of bibliometric indexes which, in turn, make it possible to refine and understand scientific production focused on its applicability. In this sense, bibliometrics can be understood as a strategy that aims to calibrate scientific activity on specific topics and, thus, to anticipate trends detected through the study and analysis of the most representative literature of the state of the art in the scientific environment (Liberati et al., 2018).

Unlike some years ago, when it was necessary to invest a lot of time and money to classify information, since the process was manual, today, with technological progress, computer systems improve data processing and more accurate and reliable information can be obtained. Ding et al. 2014; Garfield, 1955 y Merigó et al. 2015b, as cited in (Cancino et al., 2017).

Bibliometric studies are essential to formulate syntheses on a wider and more varied range of authors, contexts and reflections that, as a whole, form the research findings through the combination of results from various sources. This combination, called meta-analysis, enables a methodological application based on a new approach, grouping and connecting results and findings from other approaches (Reynaud & Todescat, 2017). The term "meta-analysis" emerged in 1976 by Gene Glass to describe the statistical combination of independent research findings applied to a quantitative approach (Liberati et al., 2018).

The objective of using this methodology in the research is to use the meta-analysis technique as a strategy of bibliometric analysis to evaluate the state of the art of "Public management in higher education".

For the bibliographic exploration regarding the topic "Public management in higher education" was carried out with a search argument in the Scopus database. The search protocol was applied in July 2021 and finally worked with the following structure: (TITLE-ABS-KEY ("public management") AND TITLE-ABS-KEY ("higher education")) AND (LIMIT-TO (PUBYEAR , 2021) OR LIMIT-TO (PUBYEAR , 2020) OR LIMIT-TO (PUBYEAR , 2019)). Initially, 365 records were identified corresponding to the following search criteria: (TITLE-ABS-KEY ("public management") AND TITLE-ABS-KEY ("higher education")), to which temporal and relevance filters were applied, leaving us with only 83 documents, which were subjected to bibliometric analysis, considering the categories of evolution of publications by year, by authors, by areas of knowledge and by countries.

The export of the data in comma-separated format has allowed integrating the information into the VOS Viewer program with which the analysis of co-occurrences of the key terms was carried out, as an exploration of the thematic associated with the theme of "Public management in higher education". In addition, the TESAUROS methodology was applied to obtain a slightly more consolidated heat map by conglomerating the terms that are repeated.

For the analytical review of the most relevant documents of the data, full-text readings were carried out, which allowed the identification of categories such as theoretical approaches to the phenomenon, theoretical models,

methodologies, factors that influence the public management of higher education and the relationship between good management and quality education.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This part presents the results of the research from the bibliometric analysis on the topic of public management in higher education; as indicated in the methodology section, the existing information in the Scopus database has been selected and organized with a search argument that allows capturing metadata for the following analysis.

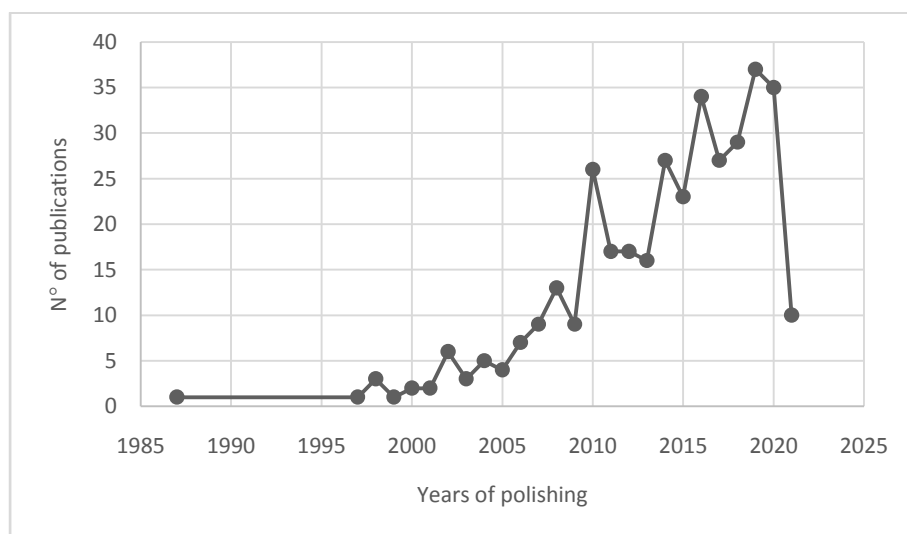
Regarding the behavior of publications over time (Figure 1), it can be observed that researchers have been interested in the topic since 1987, and this data series graph shows a constant trend in approximately the first 10 years with respect to the topic of public management in higher education. From the year 2000 onwards, we can already observe a growing trend whose highest peak occurs in the year 2019 with 37 publications.

The two dimensions that underlie and establish the conditions for an optimal development of administrative capacities, taking as a point of reference the different models of public administration considered as exemplary (mainly the Nordic and Scandinavian models) are as follows: the country's economy, i.e., its production capacity and equitable distribution of wealth (its positioning in the global market -first and third world-); and the cultural and socio-political, i.e., social responsibility, honesty, and another series of cultural imaginaries and dynamics that function as catalysts of efficiency in management processes. (En and Gerencia, 2019).

In the last ten years, the trend in research on the development of public management in higher education has been oriented towards the relationship between efficient public management and quality education.

Figure 1

Annual publications in Scopus 1987 - July 2021



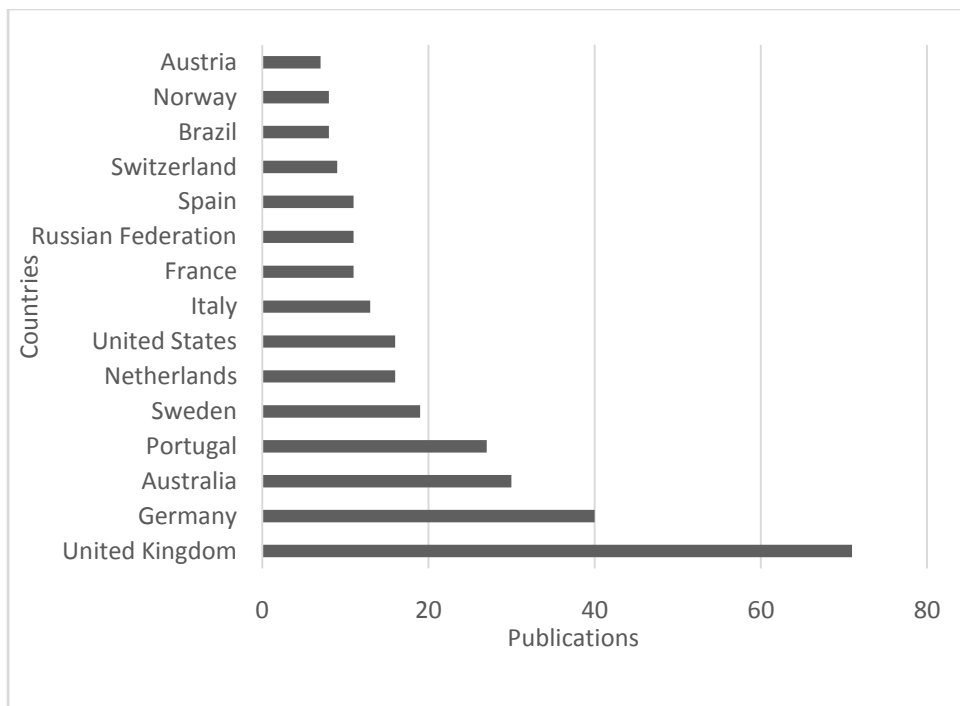
Source: Scopus database

The study on public management in higher education has motivated the interest in different intensity in many countries of the world, figure 2 shows the great participation of the United Kingdom, Germany and Australia. Latin America has a not very relevant presence represented by Brazil in this analysis as shown in the graph below.

As we can see, Latin America does not have much interest in the subject since the NPM model entered these countries much later than European countries, in the case of Peru, it was implemented in the 2000s.

Figure 2

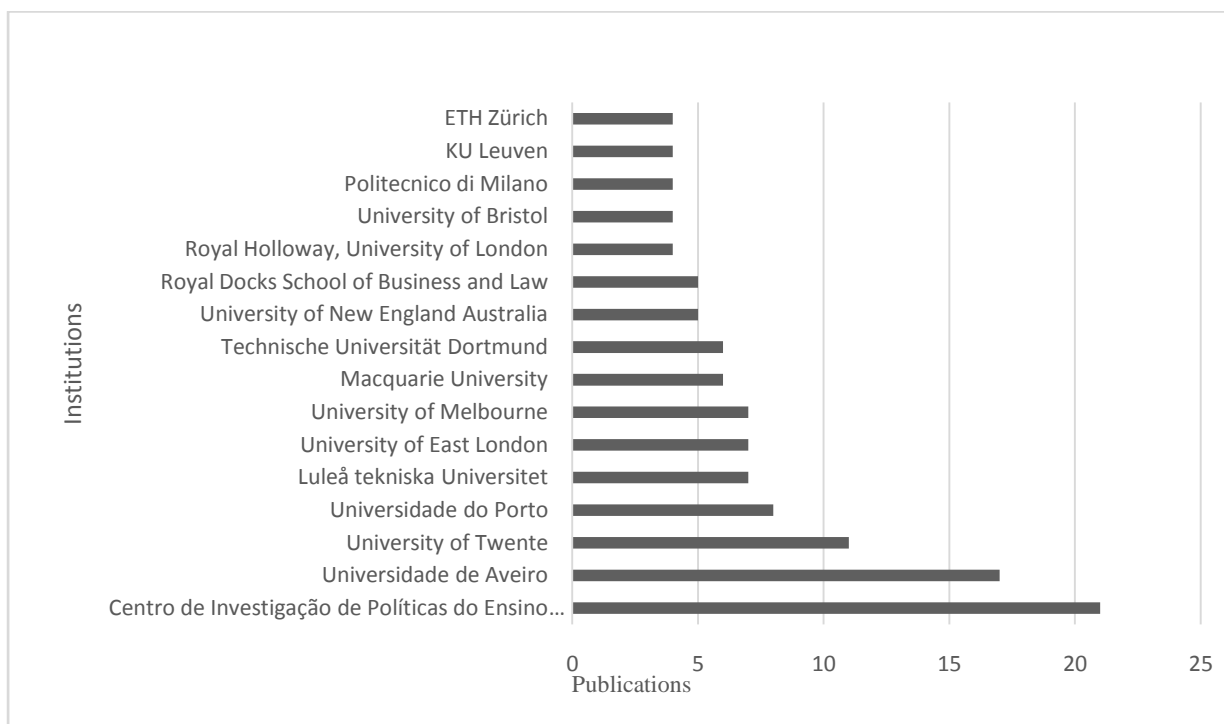
Publications by country 1987- July 2021



Note: The 15 most relevant countries in publications are presented out of a list of 56 countries.
 Source: Scopus database

In this Graph 3 we can see that the institution "Centro de Investigação de Políticas do Ensino Superior, Portugal" is one of the most representative in publications on "Public management in higher education", with 21 publications. This reaffirms Portugal's interest in the study and analysis of this topic, a country which, in Graph 2, is among the 5 countries with the highest number of publications on higher education management.

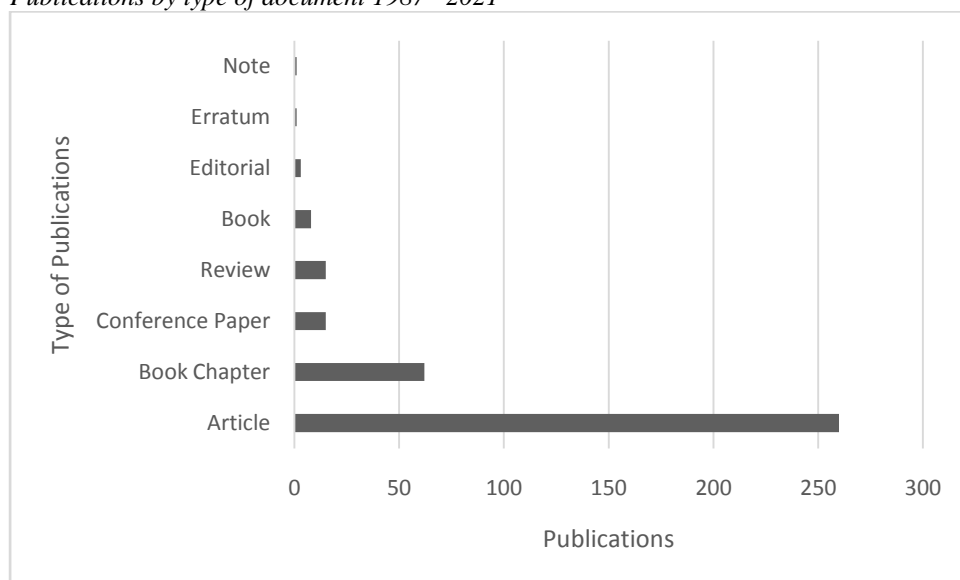
Figure 3
Publications by authors' institutional affiliation 1987- 2021



Note: The 15 institutions of affiliation of the most relevant authors in publications are presented out of a list of 160: Scopus database

Here in this figure 4 we can observe that the best way in which researchers approach the topic is through Articles, followed by book chapter and conference paper. Up to 2021 there is a total of 260 Articles published on the topic of "Public management in higher education".

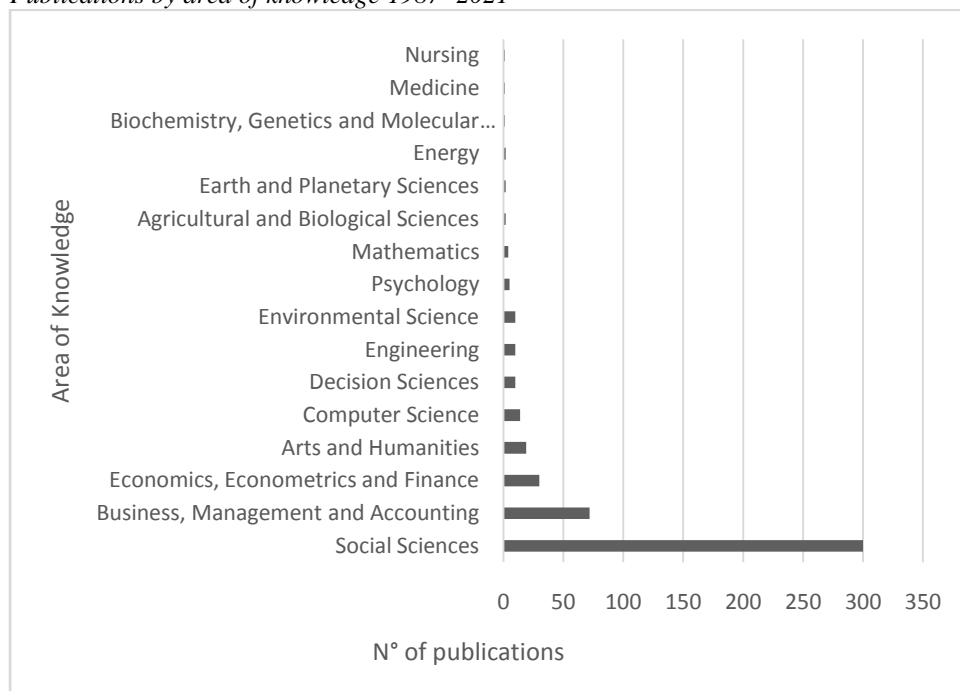
Figure 4
Publications by type of document 1987– 2021



Source: Scopus database

In this figure 5 we can see that the social sciences is the area with the largest number of publications on the topic of "Public management in higher education" with 300 publications up to 2021, we can also observe that areas such as medicine, nursing and energy have touched on this topic from their perspective in a smaller proportion.

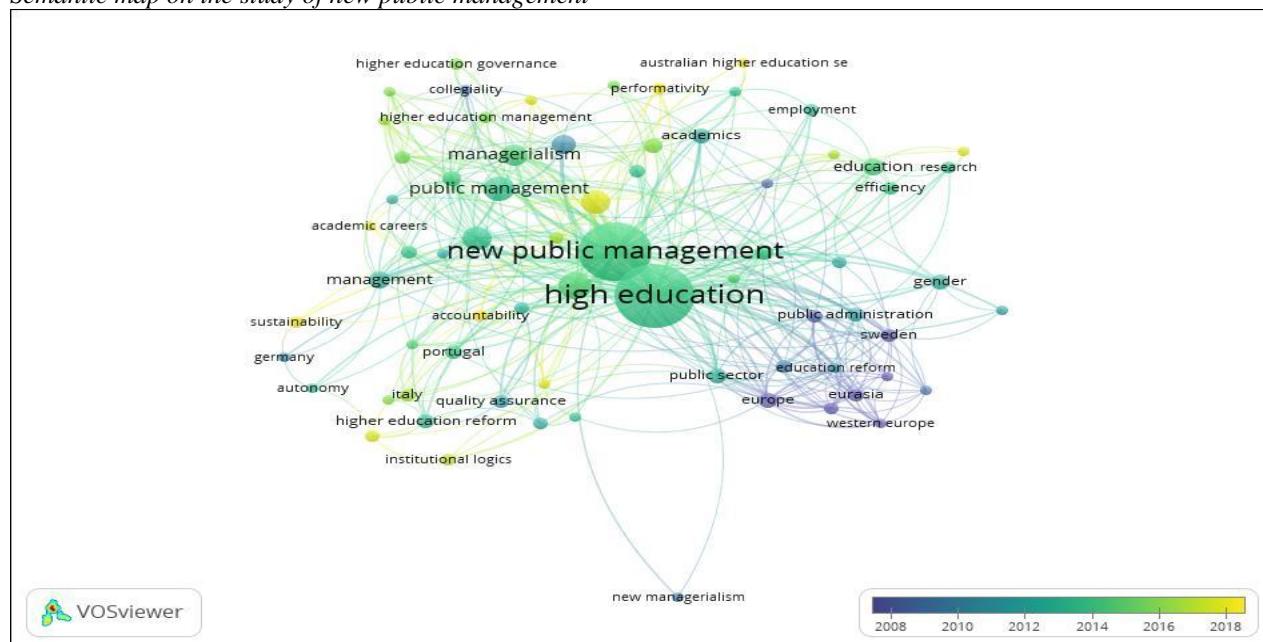
Figure 5
Publications by area of knowledge 1987- 2021



Source: Scopus database

With reference to the semantics in the conceptual theoretical approach to public management in higher education, there are many trends that show the interest and its relationship with some sub-themes and that are part of the scientific literature analyzed in this study. The following themes stand out: new public management, governance in higher education, higher education reform, public administration, institutional logistics, new public management, neoliberalism, political education, humanities, accounting and academia; it is necessary to mention the presence of concepts such as privatization and universities such as institutional economics. Regarding the countries with the greatest presence in the mentions of scientific articles, the United Kingdom, Germany, Australia, Portugal, among others, stand out..

Figure 6
Semantic map on the study of new public management



Source: Scopus database processed with VOSViewer free software

As a result of the review, reading and documentary analysis, it can be observed that public management in higher education institutions has undergone a significant change since the second half of the 20th century, in response to the emergence of the New Public Management paradigm, based on which different approaches emerge to address the analysis of the efficiency of the per formative measures implemented as part of this paradigm.

New Public Management (NPM) has been proposing reforms in the higher education sector and the academic debate on how universities should be governed since the 1980s. Among its reforms is the introduction of accountability and efficiency measures in the form of performance measurement and a pay for performance system, another key aspect of NGP is the introduction of a governance structure more akin to that of financial institutions, as well as different incentive systems to generate resources and other additional measures.(Facchini and Fia 2019).

There is no consensus; there are authors who support this NPM paradigm and others who criticize it for its market-oriented mercantilist vision, which allows universities to lose their *raison d'être*. According to the authors who support the NPM paradigm, success and productivity can be increased and, therefore, more democratic governance can be fostered. In this sense, the central problem lies in whether the state should play a minimum or maximum role through a set of per formative measures(Gaus, 2019).

The neo-Weberian state, a model developed in Europe, an approach in which the role of the state is seen as an agent of assistance and protection against external environmental threats. Which may hinder the achievement of the reform objectives proposed by the new public management (Pollit, Thiel y Homburg, 2007).

One of the performative measures, which is attributed to the new public management is the implementation of a new form of governance within higher education. "Governance plays a fundamental role because it establishes the institutional arrangements that define the functioning of a university and consists of formal and informal

rules that allocate decision-making power and responsibilities to different subjects (Hirsch y Weber, 2001)” (Facchini y Fia, 2019, p. 1).

Another contribution to consider is that for the NGP in the contemporary academic world is not understood without attending to the emergence of digital management devices and platforms (DMD). It is the combination of both developments that we have called the digital turn in university management. The implementation of DMDs is not a homogeneous and fully successful process, but is fraught with attempts, failures and failures that need the voice of academics to be understood to their fullest extent. (Fardella, Baleriola, and Enciso, 2020, p. 64).

There is some research that shows that the results of the implementation of the NGP are not as efficient with the different control, performance and productivity tools applied by this paradigm in higher education institutions.

In the Italian case, the results obtained regarding the implementation of the NGP paradigm, according to, Facchini y Fia (2019), obtained "a top-down governance structure with a powerful rector, with department heads (DCs) enjoying less representation in the central governing bodies, and with the strengthening of the administrative structure"(p.2). This is evidence that efficient results are not always achieved with the application of the NPM paradigm.

Another key aspect that is evident from the literature review is that a key mechanism has been the introduction of performance-based funding systems designed to reward "high performing" institutions and incentivize "lower performing" institutions to improve. However, the results show that rather than improving efficiency and quality across the board, we argue that performance-based funding systems naturalize existing structural inequalities between institutions by reframing national higher education systems as competitive institutional meritocracies in which institutional inequalities are redefined as objective indicators of "merit" or intrinsic value.(Mateos-González y Boliver 2019, p. 1)

According to, Christensen (2019)“the neoliberal model proposes that competition improves educational quality and as a result of generating competition for extramural funding, universities are moving from being an educational community with shared governance to a top-down bureaucracy increasingly managed as a traditional profit-seeking corporation in which faculty have no meaningful and effective voice”(p. 231).

The organizational and functional structures of higher education institutions have been extensively reformed as part of the proposals and performative measures of the NGP, due to this, the perception of one of the most important actors in this process, such as teachers, is of vital importance, since many of them are opposed to the changes, Carvalho y Videira (2019), we are told that "professionals' perceptions of changes in institutional governance and their professional autonomy suggest that professionals perceive that the changes negatively affect their participation in institutional decision-making processes, but this does not automatically translate into a perception of loss of professional autonomy" (p. 1).In this sense, higher education seen from the perspective of the NGP and governance "generate different dynamics that modify the rules of the game by overvaluing the research function and give a new meaning to the work of academics in a logic of scientific production in favor of institutional achievements that provide prestige and positioning in national and international rankings” (Suárez-Landazábal y Espinosa,2020, p. 1).Losing its autonomy and real value as a house of study and training.

The documentary review also found that it is pertinent to analyze the point of view of the top management of higher education, since it is a factor that has a significant influence on the results of the application of the performative measures proposed by the NGP. According to, Croucher y Lacy,(2020), “Leaders' perceptions of the importance, significance and trajectory of Australian universities suggest that the basic goals of higher education will likely have to continue to be balanced against emerging neoliberal agendas”(p.1).

Another sector that is affected by the NGP, apart from university teachers and students, are librarians, who have to take on certain challenges of a market-oriented culture and whose findings reflect the perceptions of this group of workers in higher education institutions and who according to, Berkovich y Wasserman (2019), “reflect a cultural appropriation of the integration taking place under the dominant NPM, resulting in a hybrid traditional-NPM culture”. (p. 1).

The different approaches most commonly used by various authors to approach research on New Public Management in higher education are the qualitative, inductive, descriptive and cooperative-industrial approaches. But the most frequently used is the qualitative approach.

“The practice of conducting qualitative studies involves continuous reflection on the data and theories so that, to some extent, the data inform the research questions (Ahrens and Chapman, 2006)”(Martin-Sardesai et al.,2020, p. 6).

What we can also observe in the analysis of the literature is that there is a conservative vision that contradicts the implementation of the NGP, based on the existence of a mercantilization of higher education, hidden control by the state that does not generate efficient results in the administration of higher education and on the contrary generates greater inequality among the different higher education institutions.

Although the majority of studies on the subject of NPM in higher education take a qualitative approach, some authors believe that the NPM paradigm threatens the teaching of qualitative research and emphasize the importance of "naturalistic inquiry”. According to, Beuving y de Vries (2020), “Naturalistic inquiry upholds the

emancipatory ideal of making society transparent to its members. Teaching naturalistic inquiry as a craft may be the best way to ensure the "qualitative literacy" of graduates in their various careers as socially responsible professionals" (p. 42).

The incorporation of corporate or commercial principles in higher education and in the work of academics through performative measurements shows hidden control by the government (Gaus y Hall, 2016) and coercion disguised through policy technology (Foucault, 1982). These have had corrosive effects on academic freedom and autonomy, pushing the performance of scholarly activities toward that which Veblen (1918) called "pecuniary culture" in the pursuit of scholarship and research.(Gaus, 2019, p. 295)

In view of the different changes proposed and implemented in the NGP, research has concluded that these changes have not generated positive results in higher education. These results should be evaluated in terms of performance, productivity, quality and efficiency. Thus, Ramírez-Gutiérrez et al. (2020), proposes "the calculation of efficiency indexes with data envelopment analysis (DEA) models, introducing a previous step through canonical correlation analysis (ACC)" (p. 468).In this sense, multivariate analysis is relevant and its rigorousness generates confidence in policy formulation and resource management in higher education.

A fundamental problem that prevents greater performance and improvement in quality and efficiency is the issue of financing. The authors and statistics agree that in the different countries of the world the budget allocated to this sector is being cut, specifically in higher education, which, together with massification, ends up reducing spending per student and the level of quality of the educational service(Ramírez-Gutiérrez et al., 2020).

CONCLUSIONS

We can conclude that there is no consensus among the different authors on how to approach the implementation of the New Public Management in higher education.

Studies related to the subject of the NPM paradigm in higher education show that due to the different approaches applied by the authors in their research as a whole, they do not generate efficient results, since there is resistance to change on the part of the authorities that administer them and other actors linked to the process.

The NGP is underpinned by neoliberal ideology that drives academic institutions to take behaviors according to corporate norms and the culture of audit and accountability, along with sanctions and rewards that are more enforced and perceived, which generate in the long term inequality among higher education institutions.

We can also see that there are not many methodologies for calculating efficiency with indicators on the tools and strategies proposed by the NPM paradigm in higher education.

Another problem that is controversial is the studies and proposals on the problem that the NGP intends to solve regarding the financing of higher education that in some way guarantees the quality of the service.

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