Policies for Educational Inclusion in Latin America: a Review

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Abstract

A documentary review was carried out on the publications made in high impact journals indexed in Scopus database regarding the implementation of policies for Educational Inclusion in Latin America during the period between 2015 and 2020. The information was identified through the application of search filters in the aforementioned platform, and organized by means of tables and figures that allow the realization of a quantitative analysis of the information where main characteristics such as year of publication, country of origin, area of knowledge and type of publication are mentioned. The total number of publications is 986 documents, Brazil is identified as the Latin American country with the highest number of publications, a total of 482 documents, and the year with the highest number of publications in the period was 2020, when 245 research works were registered. The area with the highest number of contributions to the execution of research projects related to the topic under study was Social Sciences with a total of 554 documents and the type of publication chosen by most authors was the journal paper, which represents 76% of the total production. Similarly, examples of publications are identified to establish the position of the main authors regarding the management of policies to implement inclusive inclusion strategies in Latin American academic institutions.

Keywords: Educational Inclusion, Educational Policies, Latin America, Educational Management.

1. Introduction

Educational processes seek quality in the academic training of future professionals, a quality that is perceived by them taking into account factors such as accessibility, coverage, inclusion, among others. In order to serve communities with difficult access to education, strategies have been implemented taking advantage of advances in communication technologies, through virtual

programs and the digitalization of contents (Education, 2016) . The pedagogical and decision-making processes within the educational management also have a direct relationship with the allocation of resources by governmental actors, who are the ones who must ensure the fulfillment of the right to education for all people regardless of their conditions (Parra-Martínez, 2017)   the distribution of resources must take into account aspects such as the infrastructure of the facilities, academic content, support staff, constant training of the teaching staff, etc. (Inciarte, Marcano, & Reyes, 2006). Therefore, in areas where there are cases of corruption such as improper allocation of resources, detour of resources, improper conclusion of contracts, among others, the quality of education is not adequate to ensure accessibility to it, which happens very commonly in emerging economies such as Latin America.

Exclusion occurs in contexts such as education, health, recreation, housing, transportation, among other contexts and situations of daily life. Sometimes it is directly perceived, in others it is not so easy to notice, but in many of the circumstances of exclusion, they are socially accepted even by those who suffer from some limitation, due to the normalization of such practice. However, the acceptance of international regulations, the expansion of democracy and the main attention to Human Rights, has allowed the adoption of inclusion policies or strategies in sectors such as education, to such an extent that it is thought from the point of view of the inclusion of people with disabilities (Clavijo Castillo & Bautista-Cerro, 2020). to such an extent that it is thought from the design of the architecture in the facilities of educational institutions, where access ramps, elevators for wheelchairs, books with Braille language, among others, have been implemented. Even the training of teachers in the treatment of people with some type of disability. When talking about physical disabilities, there are also pedagogical processes aimed at teaching people with some mental limitation. Inclusion of racial minorities, minority groups such as victims of violence, LGBTQ+ tables, etc. are also addressed. Therefore, the main characteristics of the bibliography found in the Scopus database were identified in order to answer the following question: How has been the production of scientific publications in the area of Educational Inclusion in Latin America during the period 2015-2020?

2. General Objective

To analyze from a bibliometric and bibliographic perspective, the production of high impact research papers on the variable Inclusive Education Policies in Latin America during the period 2015-2020.

3.Methodology

Quantitative analysis of the information provided by Scopus is performed under a bibliometric approach on the scientific production regarding the variable Inclusive Education Policies in Latin America during the period 2015-2020. Likewise, it is analyzed from a qualitative perspective, examples on some research works published in the area of study indicated above, from a bibliographic approach to describe the position of different authors facing the proposed topic.

3.1 Methodological design

Table 1 shows the methodological design proposed for the development of this research.

Table 1. Methodological design.

	PHASE	DESCRIPTION	CLASSIFICATION
PHASE 1	DATA COLLECTION	Data was collected using the Search tool on the Scopus web page, where a total of 986 published documents were identified.	Published papers whose variables of study are related to the Policies for Inclusive Education. Research papers published during the period 2015-2020. Without distinction of type of research. Limited to Latin American countriesWithout distinction of area of knowledge.
PHASE 2	CONSTRUCTION OF ANALYSIS MATERIAL	The information identified in the previous phase is organized. The classification will be made by means of graphs, figures and tables based on data provided by Scopus.	Year of publication Country of origin of the publication. Area of knowledge. Type of publication
PHASE 3	DRAFTING OF CONCLUSIONS AND FINAL DOCUMENT	After the analysis carried out in the previous phase, we proceed to the drafting of the conclusions and the preparation of the final document.	

Source: Own elaboration (2021)

4. Results
4.1 Co-occurrence of words

Figure 1 below shows the use and frequency of keywords in the research identified in Phase 1 of the methodological design.
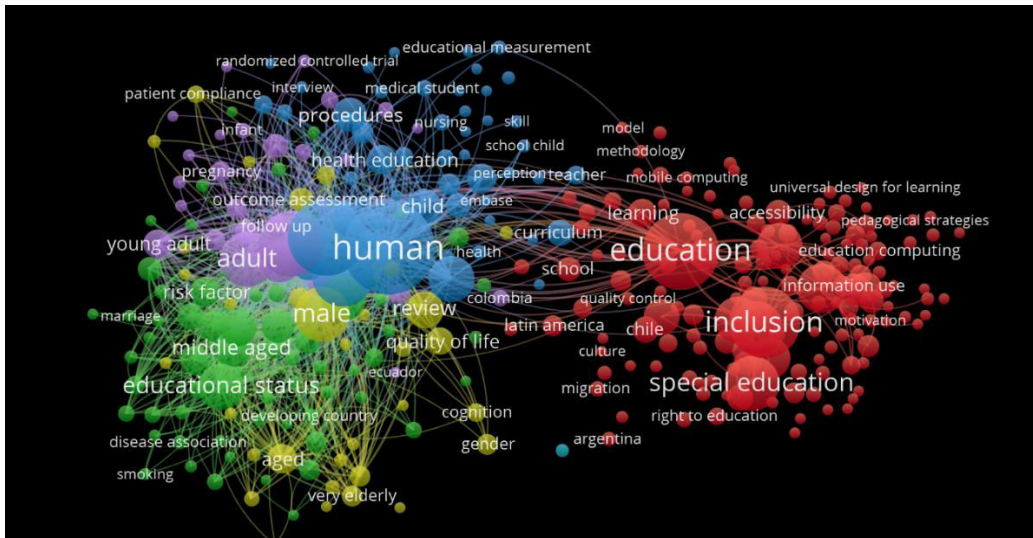
Figure 1. Co-occurrence of words
Source: Own elaboration (2021); based on data provided by Scopus

The keywords most frequently used in the study on policies for inclusive education are headed by the word Human, which is closely related to research related to Students, Education, Learning, Quality of Life, which allows inferring that what is related to the study of the level of education, takes into account conditions that allow defining the quality of life in students. On the other hand, words related to the physical condition are identified as, Diseases, Risk Factor, Pregnancy, which suggests that the limitations in health for any cause, are taken into account in the study of strategies implemented to achieve an inclusive education thus ensuring compliance with fundamental rights and its main characteristic which is universality. On the far right of the figure, there is a marked relationship between the words Inclusion, Special Education, Disability, Accessibility, Programs and Applications, Learning Processes, E-learning, which allows reflecting on the special attention to the different aspects that must be taken into account to comply with inclusive education policies, from the identification of the main characteristics of the group of students, to the implementation of strategies that allow the fulfillment of objectives. The use of applications and programs is mentioned, closely related to Accessibility, which implies the use of technological resources for the education of people who have difficulties in accessing educational systems.

4.2 Distribution of scientific production by year of publication.
Figure 2 shows the historical evolution of the volume of scientific production on the variable Policies for Educational Inclusion during the period 2015-2020 in Latin America.
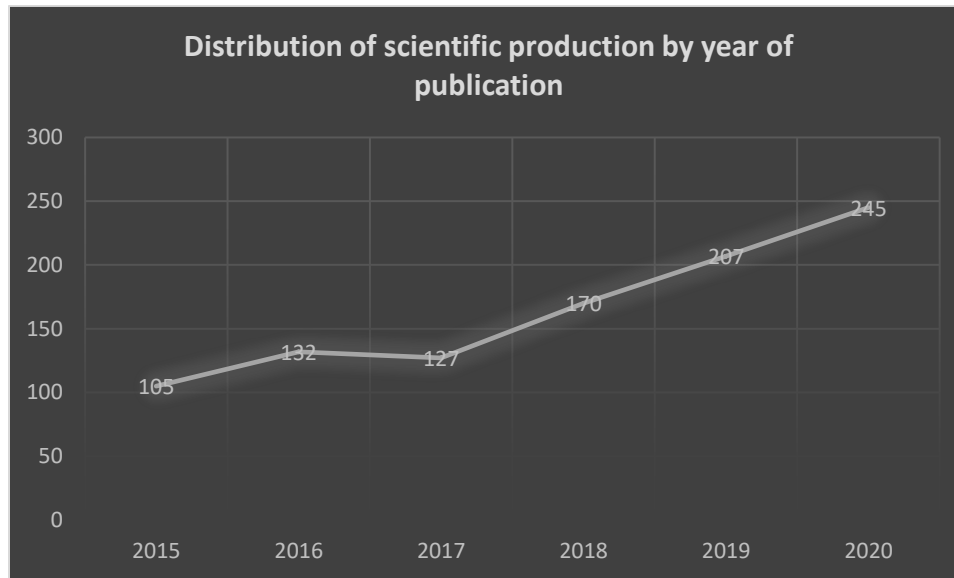
Figure 2. Distribution of scientific production by year of publication.
Source: Own elaboration (2021); based on data provided by Scopus.

The period chosen to carry out the analysis was between 2015 and 2020, among which the latter was the one with the highest production of scientific publications registered in Scopus with a total of 245 documents within which is the article entitled "*Inclusive education: A systematic review of research on students, teachers, families and institutions and its implications for educational guidance*" (Reyes-Parra, Moreno, Amaya, & Avendano, 2020). which carries out a documentary review of research works related to inclusive education with the purpose of serving as a guide in the planning of strategies to address this issue in educational institutions, understanding this variable as the willingness of institutions to recognize and respond to the diversity of students. The main objective of the aforementioned article is to identify trends in the work with students, teachers, families and institutions. The study was carried out on 50 publications, reaching the conclusion of the positive effects that students perceive in their pedagogical processes through strategies implemented by the different actors involved in the teaching-learning process, among which are both teachers and families.

2019 was the second year in which the largest number of research papers were published, in which the article entitled "*Strategies for inclusive and safe education using virtual reality: from the perspective of the digital library*" (Diaz-Lopez, Ortiz, & Contreras, 2019). which analyzes inclusive policies through the digitization of academic content, with the purpose of improving accessibility to education, using the virtual library as the main support in setting objectives and their subsequent fulfillment.

Of the period analyzed in the present research, the year in which the lowest number of publications was recorded in Scopus was 2015, with a total of 105 documents, within which the conference article entitled "*Evaluating the ability to find open educational resources from the perspective of users with disabilities: a preliminary approach*" stands out. (Navarrete & Lujan-Mora, 2015). which has as its purpose, as the title indicates, to evaluate the degree of real accessibility that digital platforms really offer to students with disabilities, since in many of the analyses carried out it was

identified that access is limited and does not take into account a large number of disabilities such as hearing or visual, so its main objective is to address the issue of the searchability of Open Educational Resources, from three fundamental aspects; Web Accessibility, Good practices of use oriented to users with disabilities, and Information Architecture.

4.3 Distribution of scientific production by country of origin.

Figure 3 below shows how the publication record is distributed according to the country of origin of the institutions through which the publication was made.
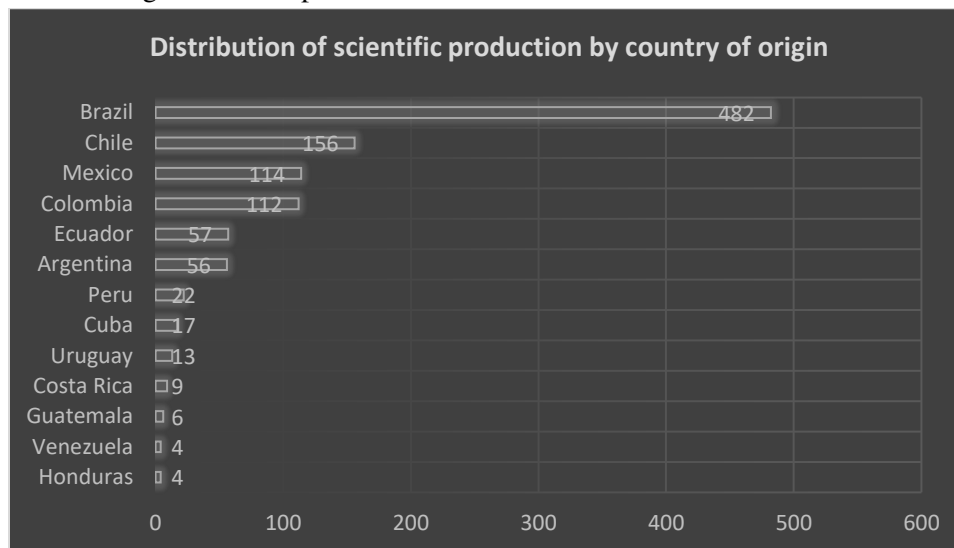
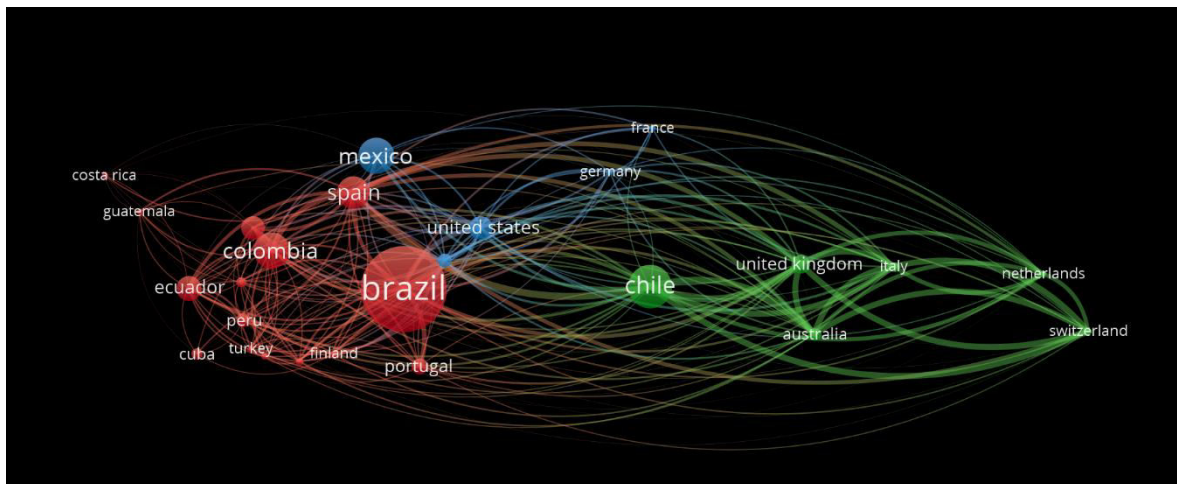**Figure 3.** Distribution of scientific production by country of origin.
Source: Own elaboration (2021); based on data provided by Scopus.

Of the Latin American countries, Brazil has the largest number of publications made under the variable Policies for Inclusive Education, during the period 2015-2020 with a total of 482 documents within which is the article entitled "*Assistive Technology in the construction of numerical concepts: a study involving actions of teachers and students with visual impairment*" (Raupp & Geller, 2020). whose main objective is to reflect on the use of AT (Assistive Technology), as well as the use of adapted materials for students with visual impairments in the first years of elementary school. From the point of view of educational management, this suggests an important challenge in the allocation of resources in the infrastructure of the institution, as well as in information architecture and teacher training.

On the other hand, Chile is in second place, registering a total of 156 publications, among which is the one entitled "*Inclusive teacher practices in Chilean school classrooms: A comparative study*". (Espinoza, Hernandez, & Ledezma, 2020). whose general objective is to identify and compare the inclusive pedagogical practices reported by teachers in two schools in the Coquimbo Region, Chile, in response to the diversity of students who require special attention in their training process. The policies designed for the implementation of inclusive strategies in education, according to the study, show possibilities for improvement through the effort generated by teachers when identifying special or different conditions within their groups of students, which indicates a high degree of commitment and responsibility with the work of teaching in the institutions studied, however, a greater effort is expected from the institutions in terms of infrastructure and training.

Mexico and Colombia are in third and fourth place with 114 and 112 publications, respectively. Of the latter, the conference article "*Rules for teaching deaf students: a creative action that transcends inclusive education*" stands out. (Pilonieta-Cortes, Martinez-Lozano, & Vergel, 2019). which aims to create guidelines to guide the pedagogical processes for children with hearing impairment, after the identification made by the same study through its main finding which was through the measurement of learning times between hearing and deaf students, concluding that students with hearing limitations require more time to assimilate new knowledge compared to hearing students, which allows suggesting to the administration of educational institutions, a visual, experiential and tangible support to optimize learning in students with this type of limitation.

At this point it is worth noting that the production of scientific publications, when classified by country of origin, presents a special characteristic and that is the collaboration between authors with different affiliations to both public and private institutions, and these institutions can be from the same country or from different nationalities, so that the production of an article co-authored by different authors from different countries of origin allows each of the countries to add up as a unit in the overall publications. This is best explained in Figure 4, which shows the flow of collaborative works from different countries, with Brazil as the main Latin American country publishing in collaboration with authors from different countries such as Spain, Portugal, Colombia, Chile, the United States and Mexico.


Figure 4. Co-authorship between countries in Latin America.
Source: Own elaboration (2021); based on data provided by Scopus.

On the other hand, Chile finds associations with authors affiliated with institutions in the United Kingdom, Australia, Germany, Holland and Switzerland, without leaving aside the co-authorship with Latin American countries as well.

4.3 Distribution of scientific production by area of knowledge

Figure 5 shows how the production of scientific publications is distributed according to the area of knowledge through which the different research methodologies are executed.
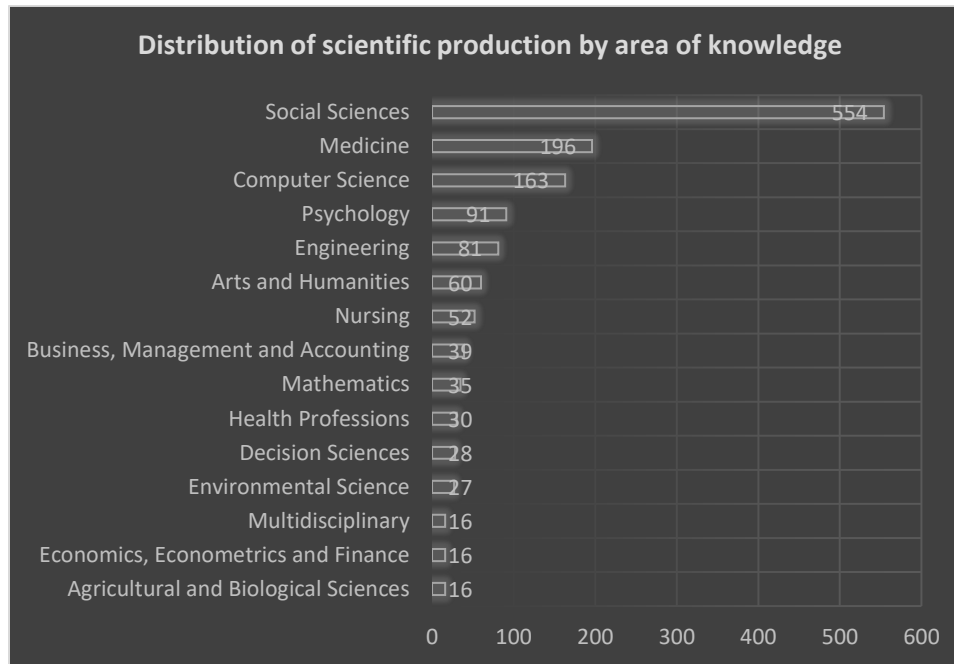
Figure 5. Distribution of scientific production by country of origin.
Source: Own elaboration (2021); based on data provided by Scopus.

Social Sciences is the area of knowledge through which more contributions are made to research and publication of scientific papers, registering a total of 554 publications in total within which we highlight the article entitled "*Self-determination skills in Chilean students with intellectual disabilities: Moving towards a successful inclusion*" (Alvarez-Aguado, et al., 2020). whose main objective is to evaluate the self-perceptions of 264 Chilean students with intellectual disabilities about their self-determination. The study reveals low levels of self-determination, which leads to a self-concept of skills to face challenges in education, so the study suggests a reorientation of the supports directed to students with disabilities, and the promotion of training programs that allow working on skills that lead to an increase in self-determination.

In second place is the area of Medicine, registering a total of 196 documents published during the period 2015-2020, within which stands out the article entitled "*Inclusion of disability in higher education: knowledge and perceptions of the academic community*" (Correa, Masuchi, Baeta, Takiuchi, & Bianco, 2019). whose objective is to study the necessary knowledge and awareness on the part of the academic community as well as their perceptions, regarding inclusion in higher education, which manifested through exploratory research, the need to design more training and awareness programs on disability, in the case of people with difficulties for their displacement within educational institutions, for example the implementation of assistive technology resources for this population. Likewise, the institutions are urged through their pedagogical processes, to the continuous training of teachers as the main inclusive policy for quality training based on the principle of equity.

4.4 Type of publication
Figure 6 shows the different options and preferences that authors have when publishing their research achievements.
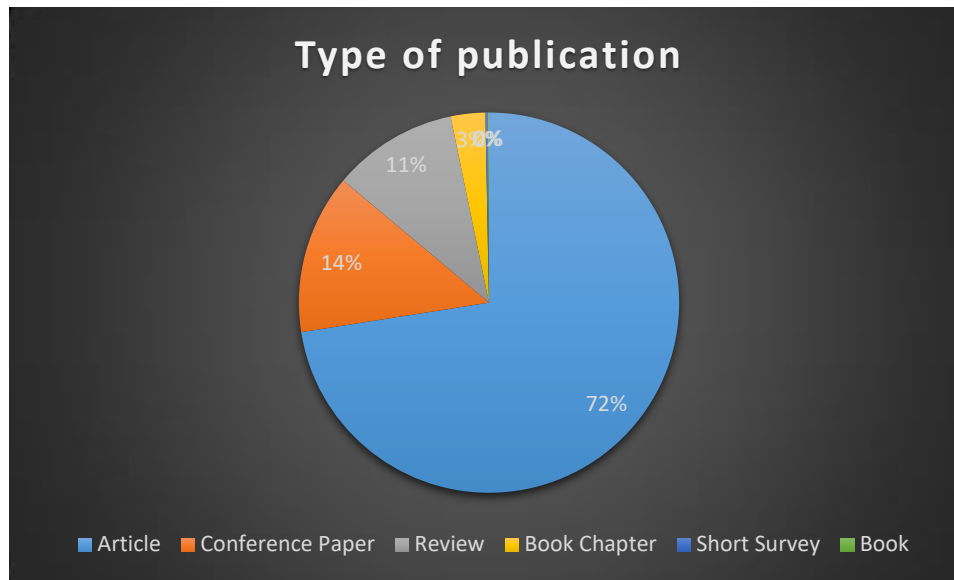
Figure 6. Distribution of scientific production by country of origin.
Source: Own elaboration (2021); based on data provided by Scopus.

The type of publication mostly used in the research and dissemination of findings on the variable Policies for Inclusive Education was the Journal Article with 72% over the total number of publications identified through the execution of phase 1 of the methodological design. This is followed by Conference Articles with 14%. The reviews also represent an important number of copies within the total production with 11%, among which are those entitled "*Supports for the quality of life of schoolchildren with and without disabilities: Literature review*" (Sanchez-Gomez, Lopez, Lopez, Amor, & Verdugo, 2020) which carries out a documentary review on the aspects taken into account in the measurement of quality of life for students with and without disabilities, focusing on the comparison generated by the equality or inequality in the conditions in which they carry out their learning processes.

In this way, it is possible to obtain an important and fundamental bibliography for future studies dedicated to the design of inclusion policies for a quality and equitable education. The researchers identified in this research show how the technological approach in many of the applications used in the virtualization of contents, helps greatly to the accessibility of remote education for the disabled population, however, a greater effort is required by educational institutions in the adaptation of spaces for the access of students with physical disabilities. Similarly, the review entitled "*Special education in an inclusive perspective: the role of the municipal education council"* is recorded (Baptista & Viegas, 2016) which shows how state policies in Brazil oblige institutions to receive students with some type of disability within their academic processes, regardless of whether the modality is special or traditional, the institutions must ensure access to the student community and its diversity, thus ensuring equity when admitting students to their training centers. Institutions that

provide special education should strengthen their strategies for the attention of students with disabilities, and those that do not should try to make all the necessary adjustments for the attention of this population, institutionalizing inclusive policies within their educational management.

5. Conclusions

Within the bibliometric analysis proposed in the research methodology, the main characteristics of the production of research papers and their subsequent publication in high impact journals indexed in the Scopus database are established, among which Brazil is registered as the country with the highest number of publications with a total of 482 documents, which allows inferring that in view of its large number of inhabitants and the diversity found in them, it is necessary to implement policies for equity and inclusion in the academic training of students regardless of their physical or mental condition, ensuring a high level of commitment by educational institutions in the design of strategies for the educational care of the population of students regardless of their physical or mental condition, guaranteeing a high level of commitment by educational institutions in the design of strategies for the educational care of students with disabilities.

The aim is to implement policies of equity and inclusion in the academic training of students regardless of their physical or mental condition, guaranteeing a high level of commitment on the part of educational institutions in the design of strategies for the educational attention to the special population of that country, with the support of governmental entities who allocate the distribution of resources to make possible the modifications in both physical and technological infrastructure of the institutions with the purpose of ensuring accessibility to the different degrees of academic training.

On the other hand, it is identified that the area of Social Sciences is the main thematic axis for research on topics related to policies for inclusive education, registering a total of 554 documents published through the different areas that frame the Social Sciences, thus confirming that due to the nature of the title proposed in this research, related to the social component and the impact generated by inclusive policies in the different phases of academic training, it seeks to generate an increase in the quality of life of students and families by offering equal opportunities when showing interest in formal education. In this way, it is demonstrated that the impact generated in society is positive because the measures adopted by the institutions allow the general population not only to have access to traditional education, but also to attend to the individual needs of a minority that traditionally was not taken into account until the declaration of Human Rights, which recognized education as one of the fundamental rights of people. Thanks to the above, the present research can be concluded from the bibliographic approach proposed in the methodology for the development of this article, that the cited authors show interest in the design and implementation of policies for inclusive education at all levels of training, and suggest to the institutions to direct all their efforts to the training of teachers in special attention to cases that may present within the classroom, to people with some type of disability.

The support that educational institutions receive from governmental actors is fundamental for the implementation of strategies to ensure accessibility in the first instance, to both school and professional education, obliging all institutions that provide educational services, whether public or private, to make the necessary improvements to facilitate access to educational facilities, either in person or remotely. Hence the importance of this study, as it constitutes an important material at the time of conducting research aimed at improving the quality of life of the disabled community and their families, in the educational field.

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