Article

Enhancing Research Visibility: A Comparative Study on the Implementation of CRIS Systems at Universidad Católica de Santa María and Its Contrast with Other Universities

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Abstract

Research visibility has become a critical issue for universities, yet the institutional conditions that shape it remain underexplored. While Current Research Information Systems (CRISs) provide essential infrastructure for managing publications and researcher profiles, their impact depends on broader governance and cultural factors. This study compares four universities—two in Peru, one in Chile, and one in Spain—that have adopted the Pure CRIS platform. Data were manually extracted from institutional portals and analyzed descriptively, using normalized indicators such as publications per researcher, Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) alignment, and collaboration networks. Although based on a limited sample, the analysis highlights substantial contrasts: European institutions show consolidated integration of CRIS into national evaluation systems, while Latin American universities remain at earlier stages of adoption, with fragmented policies and limited international reach. The findings suggest that technological platforms alone are insufficient; institutional commitment, coherent policies, and academic cultures that value dissemination are decisive. These insights contribute a comparative framework to guide universities, particularly in Latin America, seeking to strengthen their global research visibility.

Keywords: Current Research Information Systems; research visibility; Institutional Research Management; open science

1. Introduction

In the contemporary academic landscape, research visibility has become a decisive factor for universities seeking to strengthen collaboration networks, attract competitive funding, and enhance institutional reputation. Traditional bibliometric indicators such as publication counts and citation indexes remain widely used but are increasingly considered insufficient, as they do not fully capture broader dimensions of academic influence, outreach, and international projection (Abramo et al., 2019; Bordons et al., 2002; Thelwall, 2016; Fitzgerald & Radmanesh, 2015). Enhancing visibility therefore requires not only the production of knowledge but also its systematic dissemination, accessibility, and alignment with global research agendas (Martin-Martin et al., 2017; Wilsdon et al., 2017; Kankam et al., 2024; Yang et al., 2024).

To address these challenges, universities have increasingly adopted Current Research Information Systems (CRISs) as infrastructures to consolidate data on publications, projects,

and researcher profiles. These platforms facilitate both internal administration and external dissemination of research outputs (Schöpfel & Azeroual, 2021; Takahashi et al., 2024; MacIsaac & Polley, 2023). CRISs are also linked to broader developments in open science and digital transformation, acting as intermediaries between institutional repositories, national reporting systems, and international visibility frameworks (Cai et al., 2023; Schöpfel et al., 2024). However, existing research suggests that CRIS adoption alone does not guarantee improved visibility. Outcomes depend strongly on institutional conditions such as governance frameworks, funding mechanisms, and academic cultures (De Castro, 2018; Haustein, 2019; Wallace et al., 2008; McLoughlin & Martinez, 2022). While European universities often integrate CRIS within national evaluation systems and open science policies (Schöpfel & Azeroual, 2021), many institutions in Latin America remain at earlier stages of adoption, with fragmented strategies and limited international reach (Udovičić et al., 2024). This disparity points to a critical gap in the literature: the need to understand how technological infrastructures interact with institutional commitment to influence research visibility (Minteer, 2022).

This raises a central research question: to what extent does CRIS adoption enhance research visibility, and what additional institutional conditions are required for its effective use? Addressing this question is particularly relevant for universities in Latin America, where investments in digital infrastructures are increasing but policy and cultural frameworks remain underdeveloped (Takahashi et al., 2024; Jancovich et al., 2025).

To explore these issues, this study conducts a comparative analysis of four universities that have adopted the Pure CRIS platform: two in Peru, one in Chile, and one in Spain. Data were manually extracted from institutional CRIS portals and analyzed descriptively, using normalized indicators such as publications per researcher, Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) alignment, and collaboration networks. The comparison emphasizes institutional support, open science policies, researcher training, and academic culture, with the aim of identifying which conditions most effectively enhance research visibility.

The contribution of this paper is twofold. Theoretically, it advances scholarly debates by demonstrating that CRIS adoption alone is insufficient without supportive institutional frameworks. Practically, it provides a comparative perspective that highlights lessons from both European and Latin American contexts, offering guidance for universities—particularly in emerging systems—seeking to strengthen their global research projection.

2. Background

The concept of research visibility has undergone a significant evolution in recent decades. Early approaches relied primarily on bibliometric indicators such as publication counts and citation indexes (Bordons et al., 2002; Thelwall, 2016). While these remain central to research evaluation, scholars increasingly highlight their limitations: they privilege output over process, favor certain disciplines, and fail to capture broader dimensions of scientific influence such as societal impact, collaboration intensity, or open dissemination (Haustein, 2019; Schöpfel & Azeroual, 2021; Wilsdon et al., 2017). Visibility, therefore, cannot be reduced to numerical metrics alone but must be understood as a multidimensional construct embedded within institutional strategies and global research ecosystems (Martin-Martin et al., 2017; Takahashi et al., 2024).

Our comparative design focuses exclusively on institutional portals operated on Elsevier's Pure. This choice ensures platform homogeneity and measurement consistency across sites: Pure's public portals expose the same core elements—profiles, research outputs, PID linking (ORCID/DOI), open-access flags, and SDG tagging—under comparable governance and curation workflows. For each institution, we retrieved counts and proportions directly from the portal views (Research outputs/Persons/SDGs) and standardized them

over the same time window. No imputation was performed; values reflect portal visibility, which may differ from underlying totals due to local curation and update cadence.

One response to these challenges has been the adoption of Current Research Information Systems (CRIS), which enable the structured collection of data on research projects, publications, researcher profiles, and collaboration networks (Schöpfel & Azeroual, 2021; Takahashi et al., 2024). Initially conceived as administrative tools, CRISs have increasingly been positioned as infrastructures for strategic decision-making, supporting both internal governance and external communication of research activities (De Castro, 2018; Haustein, 2019). Recent studies also underline their role in advancing open science agendas, acting as integrative platforms that connect institutional repositories, persistent identifiers (such as ORCID), and national reporting frameworks (Cai et al., 2023; Schöpfel et al., 2024).

However, technology alone does not guarantee improved visibility. The literature consistently points to the importance of institutional conditions. Successful use of CRIS requires coherent policies, researcher training, and academic cultures that value dissemination (Wilsdon et al., 2017; Thelwall, 2016; Wallace et al., 2008). As Wilsdon et al. (2017) argue, research evaluation must be "responsible" and embedded in governance systems that balance accountability with the promotion of scientific excellence. Similarly, Thelwall (2016) highlights that web-based indicators and alternative metrics can complement traditional measures (Orduña-Malea et al., 2016), but their effectiveness depends on institutional strategies that ensure consistent use. These perspectives situate CRIS not merely as technical infrastructures but as socio-technical systems shaped by organizational choices (Hug & Brändle, 2017).

The literature also reveals important regional contrasts. In Europe, CRIS adoption is consolidated and, in several cases, directly integrated into national evaluation and funding mechanisms (Schöpfel & Azeroual, 2021; Takahashi et al., 2024). This alignment facilitates standardization, comparability, and interoperability across institutions. By contrast, in Latin America—and particularly in Peru—the landscape remains fragmented. While some universities have initiated CRIS adoption, the absence of national frameworks and the heterogeneity of institutional policies limit their effectiveness (De Castro, 2018; Udovičić et al., 2024). Studies on Latin American research systems emphasize the lack of systematic integration between digital infrastructures and evaluation practices, resulting in partial or inconsistent improvements in visibility (Schöpfel et al., 2024; Wilsdon et al., 2017; Moradi et al., 2020).

In line with this design, all empirical evidence in this study was derived exclusively from the public Pure portals of the participating universities, using their Research outputs, Persons, and SDGs views.

This review highlights two critical gaps. First, while the literature documents the technical functions of CRIS and their potential for supporting open science, there is insufficient empirical research on how institutional commitment and academic culture mediate their effectiveness. Second, comparative perspectives between regions with different levels of maturity—such as Europe and Latin America—remain scarce. Addressing these gaps is essential to move beyond descriptive analyses of outputs and toward a deeper understanding of the institutional conditions that make CRIS a lever for enhancing global research visibility (Fitzgerald & Radmanesh, 2015).

3. Methodology

This study conducts a descriptive comparison between universities that use the Pure system (Elsevier) as a tool to manage their scientific output. The objective is to analyze the quantitative indicators available on their institutional portals in order to identify

differences in levels of academic visibility, taking into account the degree of progress in the implementation and use of the CRIS system at each institution.

3.1. Universities Analyzed

Four universities were selected according to two main criteria:

1. **Comparability within similar contexts**—In Peru, *Universidad Católica de Santa María (UCSM)* and *Universidad del Pacífico (UP)* were chosen. Both operate in the same national system, but represent different stages of adoption: UCSM recently implemented Pure, while UP maintains a partial and limited integration.
2. **Regional and international benchmarks**—In Latin America, *Universidad de los Andes (UA, Chile)* was included as a regional case with intermediate consolidation, while *Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB, Spain)* was selected as a benchmark institution due to its advanced integration of Pure into national evaluation and funding systems.

This combination allows for a balanced comparison across institutions with similar starting conditions (UCSM–UP, UCSM–UA), and with a consolidated reference model (UAB). The goal was not to compare absolute volumes of production, but rather to highlight contrasts in institutional strategies and levels of CRIS integration (Bordons et al., 2002; Martin-Martin et al., 2017; Wilsdon et al., 2017). These contrasts can be observed in more detail in Table 1.

Table 1. Universities Analyzed and Level of Pure Implementation.

University	Country	Level of Pure Implementation
Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB)	Spain	Advanced use, integrated into national evaluation systems (Bordons et al., 2002; De Castro, 2018).
Universidad de los Andes	Chile	Active use, with progressive system integration.
Universidad del Pacífico	Peru	Partial adoption, limited visibility on CRIS platforms.
Universidad Católica de Santa María	Peru	Recent implementation, currently in the adoption phase.

3.2. Data Source

The study relied exclusively on public institutional portals powered by Pure (Elsevier) as the data source. Pure consolidates information on publications, projects, researcher profiles, collaboration networks, and institutional indicators (Abramo et al., 2019; An et al., 2017; De Castro, 2018).

Data were manually collected following these criteria:

*   Only information publicly available through the institutional Pure portals was considered.
*   Total number of registered individuals (faculty/researchers) and publications per institution.
*   Categorization of outputs according to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as structured by Pure.
*   Observation of collaboration networks and institutional visibility indicators.

The data were manually collected between January 2025 and March 2025, from the public views of the Pure system for each institution. No imputations were performed: the reported values reflect the public status of the portals at the indicated dates. Due to the dynamic nature of the portals, the results should be interpreted as a public "snapshot" taken during the specified period.

3.3. Indicators and Analysis

Three dimensions were analyzed:

1. **Institutional adoption**—number of registered individuals in Pure relative to each institution's research community.
2. **Research output**—publications per researcher and distribution of outputs by SDGs, highlighting alignment with global agendas.
3. **Internationalization**—presence and distribution of collaboration networks across institutions and regions.

The analysis is descriptive–comparative, using normalized indicators (e.g., publications per researcher rather than absolute numbers) to allow for cross-institutional comparisons.

3.4. Limitations of Data Source

While Pure portals provide structured and publicly accessible information, several limitations must be considered. First, data incompleteness may arise if portals are not fully updated at the time of extraction, leading to potential underestimation of outputs. Second, the frequency of updates differs across institutions—some update continuously while others do so only periodically—creating asymmetries in comparability. Third, institutional data curation practices vary: universities with dedicated research information offices typically ensure higher consistency, whereas others rely more on self-reporting by researchers, which may affect coverage and accuracy. As a result, the data should not be interpreted as absolute benchmarks of performance but as snapshots shaped by local governance and data management practices.

4. Results

The analysis of institutional portals based on the Pure system enabled the extraction of indicators related to the number of registered profiles, the volume of visible scientific outputs, and their alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In addition, the study considered the diversity of dissemination formats and the extent of international collaboration networks.

To provide a structured and comparative perspective, the results are organized into four dimensions: (i) volume and maturity of CRIS implementation, (ii) thematic alignment with the SDGs, (iii) diversification of academic output formats, and (iv) international collaboration networks. This approach highlights the differences between the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB) and the Latin American institutions analyzed (Universidad de los Andes, Universidad del Pacífico, and Universidad Católica de Santa María), identifying both strengths and areas for improvement in their research visibility strategies.

4.1. Volume and Maturity of CRIS Implementation

The first dimension concerns the overall volume of information managed in CRIS platforms and the degree of maturity in their institutional adoption. Table 2 presents the number of registered individuals (mainly faculty and researchers) and the number of publications visible in the system for each university.

The results show substantial disparities across institutions. The Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB) clearly stands out, with more than 229,000 publications and over 5400 registered profiles. This reflects a consolidated ecosystem for the management of scientific information, where the CRIS system has been fully integrated into research policies and institutional routines. UAB's scale also suggests the existence of complementary mechanisms—such as systematic data curation, continuous researcher engagement, and strong alignment between the CRIS and other information systems (repositories, bib-

liometric platforms, and evaluation tools)—that reinforce its role as a comprehensive infrastructure for research management.

Table 2. Number of Registered Individuals and Publications in CRIS Systems by University.

Institution	Registered Researchers	Research Outputs	Ratio
Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona	5445	229,507	42.1
Universidad de los Andes	296	7314	24.7
Universidad del Pacífico	145	6227	42.9
Universidad Católica de Santa María	89	2207	24.8

It is important to note that UAB's exceptionally high volume of outputs (229,507) not only reflects its larger research community but also the advanced integration of Pure with multiple internal systems and systematic data curation practices. These structural factors make UAB's figures less directly comparable to those of Latin American universities, which remain at earlier stages of CRIS adoption.

By contrast, the Latin American universities exhibit lower levels of adoption, though important differences can still be observed among them. The Universidad de los Andes (Chile) and the Universidad del Pacífico (Peru) show intermediate volumes, which may be interpreted as signals of gradual institutional consolidation. Their figures indicate progress toward the visibility of academic outputs, but they also reveal challenges in achieving full coverage of research activities. In these cases, the CRIS functions more as a complementary registry rather than as a fully institutionalized backbone for research governance. This partial adoption may reflect constraints such as resource availability, technical expertise, and varying levels of researcher commitment to updating their profiles.

Finally, the Universidad Católica de Santa María (Peru) registers the lowest figures, consistent with an early stage of implementation and limited researcher engagement. The reduced volume of publications and profiles highlights not only the novelty of the initiative but also the need to strengthen institutional strategies for promoting CRIS use. Without adequate incentives, training programs, and integration with evaluation mechanisms, the system risks being perceived as a purely administrative requirement rather than a valuable tool for visibility and impact.

Taken together, these findings highlight that CRIS systems alone do not guarantee visibility; rather, their impact depends on the extent of institutional integration, researcher participation, and sustained policies for data management and academic dissemination. The contrast between UAB and the Latin American universities illustrates that maturity in CRIS implementation is not simply a matter of technological availability but a multidimensional process shaped by governance, culture, and long-term investment in research infrastructure.

4.2. Thematic Alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

In addition to examining the overall volume of registered publications and researcher profiles, it is essential to analyze the extent to which institutional research agendas are aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This perspective provides a more qualitative dimension to the evaluation of CRIS platforms, as it highlights whether academic production is not only quantitatively significant but also strategically oriented toward global challenges such as poverty eradication, gender equality, climate action, and institutional strengthening. Details can be found in Tables 3 and 4.

Table 3. Number of Persons by Sustainable Development Goal (SDG).

SDG	UAB	UA	UP	UCSM
SDG 1. No Poverty	88	0	4	1
SDG 2. Zero Hunger	195	2	3	6
SDG 3. Good Health and Well-being	1520	57	10	48
SDG 4. Quality Education	268	6	13	16
SDG 5. Gender Equality	260	5	5	9
SDG 6. Clean Water and Sanitation	92	3	0	5
SDG 7. Affordable and Clean Energy	326	3	1	35
SDG 8. Decent Work and Economic Growth	337	3	34	13
SDG 9. Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure	150	3	7	23
SDG 10. Reduced Inequalities	341	2	16	5
SDG 11. Sustainable Cities and Communities	310	10	2	18
SDG 12. Responsible Consumption and Production	238	3	11	15
SDG 13. Climate Action	378	3	5	19
SDG 14. Life Below Water	195	0	0	2
SDG 15. Life on Land	229	1	1	11
SDG 16. Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions	459	3	9	16
SDG 17. Partnerships for the Goals	54	0	2	0

Note. UAB: Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (Spain); UA: Universidad de los Andes (Chile); UP: Universidad del Pacífico (Peru); UCSM: Universidad Católica de Santa María (Peru).

Table 4. Number of Research Outputs by Sustainable Development Goal (SDG).

SDG	UAB	UA	UP	UCSM
SDG 1. No Poverty	159	9	206	3
SDG 2. Zero Hunger	461	11	122	7
SDG 3. Good Health and Well-being	15,070	987	347	379
SDG 4. Quality Education	550	24	330	20
SDG 5. Gender Equality	484	17	141	9
SDG 6. Clean Water and Sanitation	181	1	35	5
SDG 7. Affordable and Clean Energy	995	118	71	77
SDG 8. Decent Work and Economic Growth	1075	24	970	11
SDG 9. Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure	194	15	842	10
SDG 10. Reduced Inequalities	700	23	599	4
SDG 11. Sustainable Cities and Communities	1041	70	212	14
SDG 12. Responsible Consumption and Production	735	15	268	22
SDG 13. Climate Action	1677	52	116	18
SDG 14. Life Below Water	956	22	13	7
SDG 15. Life on Land	935	39	168	9
SDG 16. Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions	1300	65	725	17
SDG 17. Partnerships for the Goals	122	0	2339	0

Note. UAB: Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (Spain); UA: Universidad de los Andes (Chile); UP: Universidad del Pacífico (Peru); UCSM: Universidad Católica de Santa María (Peru).

The data reveal clear asymmetries among the universities. Once again, the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB) demonstrates a marked advantage, with high levels of researcher participation and outputs across nearly all SDGs. Particularly striking is its contribution to SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being), with more than 1500 researchers involved and over 15,000 research outputs registered. Strong engagement is also evident in SDGs 4 (Quality Education), 5 (Gender Equality), and 13 (Climate Action), suggesting that UAB has successfully embedded sustainability priorities into its institutional research agenda. This alignment indicates not only thematic breadth but also the capacity to integrate social, environmental, and technological concerns into a coherent research strategy.

The Latin American universities present more modest figures but exhibit patterns that reflect their institutional identities and regional contexts. The Universidad del Pacífico (UP) displays a notable focus on SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) and SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure), consistent with its academic orientation toward economics, management, and business. Its exceptional performance in SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals), with over 2300 outputs, underscores the institution's emphasis on international collaboration and network-building as mechanisms for enhancing its global visibility. Also, an unusually high figure is observed for Universidad del Pacífico in SDG 17. This stems from the way Pure classifies working papers and policy-oriented documents as partnership-related outputs, which inflates this category relative to other institutions. This suggests that differences in metadata classification can create structural biases in SDG reporting. The Universidad de los Andes (UA), while showing lower overall engagement, demonstrates particular strength in SDG 3, with close to 1000 health-related outputs. This suggests a more focused rather than diversified approach, where institutional resources are concentrated on fields with established expertise and potential for societal impact.

In contrast, the Universidad Católica de Santa María (UCSM) exhibits a more incipient alignment, with contributions concentrated primarily in SDGs 3 (Health) and 4 (Education). While overall participation remains limited, this pattern may be linked to the university's emerging role in regional development, where health and education are pressing priorities. Interestingly, UCSM also demonstrates growing involvement in SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy) and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions), reflecting the early stages of diversification in its research agenda. This trajectory suggests that while UCSM is still consolidating its CRIS adoption, it is beginning to identify areas of strategic relevance that connect local challenges with global sustainability frameworks.

Taken together, the analysis indicates that CRIS platforms are not only repositories of research outputs but also potential instruments for tracking and fostering institutional contributions to the SDGs. However, the degree of alignment appears strongly conditioned by institutional maturity, disciplinary orientation, and strategic prioritization. UAB illustrates how sustained policies can embed SDG objectives into a broad spectrum of research activities, whereas Latin American universities are still in the process of developing thematic coherence between their research agendas and global sustainability challenges.

4.3. Diversification of Academic Output Formats

The analysis of academic output formats registered in the CRIS systems of the four universities reveals significant differences in the way institutions produce and disseminate scientific knowledge. Although journal articles represent the dominant format across all cases, the extent of diversification into other types of publications varies widely, reflecting institutional maturity, disciplinary orientation, and strategic priorities.

At the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB), the diversity of formats is particularly remarkable. While journal articles predominate (over 151,000), there is also a substantial presence of book chapters (45,203), books (15,170), review articles, and other forms of scientific synthesis. In addition, UAB registers alternative outputs such as translations, encyclopedia entries, commissioned reports, patents, and even digital or creative products. This broad spectrum highlights a consolidated and inclusive research culture in which knowledge dissemination is not limited to conventional academic channels.

In contrast, the Universidad de los Andes (UA) exhibits a more traditional but moderately diversified profile. Scientific articles remain the largest category, followed by book chapters and review articles. Formats such as conference contributions, posters, technical reports, and editorials demonstrate active participation in academic events and professional communication. Patents and other less conventional outputs are also present, but in

much smaller numbers. This suggests a balanced but still evolving institutional orientation toward diversification.

The Universidad del Pacífico (UP) reflects its disciplinary identity in economics, management, and public policy. While journal articles remain the largest category, the institution shows a relatively high proportion of book chapters and books compared to its total output, together with a strong emphasis on working papers (633 records). These formats are typical of the social sciences, where the dissemination of knowledge through monographs and preliminary working papers is particularly valued. The inclusion of official reports and policy-oriented documents also points to an applied dimension of research dissemination, bridging academic and decision-making communities.

Finally, the Universidad Católica de Santa María (UCSM) presents a more concentrated profile, with journal articles and related contributions (such as editorials, letters, and reviews) accounting for the vast majority of its output. The presence of book chapters, conference proceedings, and a small number of patents reflects an incipient process of diversification. This concentration suggests that UCSM is still consolidating its research structures and has yet to expand into alternative forms of scholarly communication at a comparable scale to the other institutions.

Taken together, these findings indicate that diversification of academic output formats is not uniform across the universities studied. UAB demonstrates a highly mature and multidimensional research system, while UP reveals a disciplinary-specific diversification aligned with the social sciences. UA exhibits moderate diversification, and UCSM remains at an early stage of expansion. In line with previous studies on research evaluation and dissemination, diversification emerges as a proxy for institutional maturity and as a mechanism to enhance both visibility and societal impact of scientific production.

4.4. International Collaboration and Global Networks

One of the most decisive factors in enhancing research visibility is the capacity of universities to establish and sustain international collaborations. The analysis of co-authorship networks and institutional partnerships recorded in the CRIS portals reveals sharp contrasts among the four universities studied.

The Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB) demonstrates the most robust and diversified international collaboration profile. Its CRIS system reflects dense networks across Europe, North America, and Latin America, as well as significant partnerships with Asia and Africa. The intensity of co-authorship links, coupled with their geographical dispersion, evidences not only the breadth of UAB's research agenda but also its active integration into global epistemic communities. These collaborations contribute directly to its high academic visibility and consolidate its role as a regional and international benchmark.

The Universidad de los Andes (UA) also displays a notable level of internationalization. Although its scale is smaller compared to UAB, UA maintains strong partnerships within the Americas and Europe, complemented by emerging links in Asia and Oceania. This pattern suggests a growing institutional commitment to global scientific dialogue, which has been reflected in a gradual increase in both the volume and quality of its academic production.

In the case of the Universidad del Pacífico (UP), international collaborations are strategically concentrated in areas that align with its disciplinary strengths in economics, management, and public policy. The CRIS data highlight frequent partnerships with universities in North America and Europe, as well as regional alliances in Latin America. The prominence of SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) in its output reinforces the idea that UP conceives international cooperation not only as an academic exercise but also as a key strategy for positioning itself as a policy-influential institution.

By contrast, the Universidad Católica de Santa María (UCSM) is still consolidating its international collaboration network. Most of its partnerships are located in Latin America, with emerging links to European and Asian institutions. Although more modest in scope, these collaborations reflect a positive trend toward internationalization and indicate the potential for UCSM to strengthen its global presence as its CRIS system matures and becomes more widely adopted.

Overall, the findings confirm that international collaboration constitutes a decisive dimension of research visibility. While technology enables the visualization of networks, the impact ultimately depends on how institutions actively build and maintain partnerships, strategically aligning them with their research priorities and visibility objectives.

5. Discussion and Conclusions

The findings confirm that the mere adoption of a CRIS platform does not, in itself, guarantee a substantial increase in research visibility. This result is consistent with previous studies emphasizing that technological infrastructure alone rarely translates into greater academic impact unless it is supported by governance and cultural change (Bordons et al., 2002; De Castro, 2018; Wilsdon et al., 2017). Although all the universities analyzed have implemented the Pure system at varying levels of integration, the impact on their academic projection differs significantly, reflecting broader institutional conditions rather than the system itself.

In the case of the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB), the large volume of research output, the diversity of recognized formats, and the sustained alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) illustrate a mature institutional ecosystem where CRIS is strategically embedded into national evaluation frameworks and internal research governance (Schöpfel & Azeroual, 2021; Takahashi et al., 2024). This supports the argument that the most visible universities are those that have transformed research information management into an instrument for planning, accountability, and international positioning (De Castro, 2018; Haustein, 2019).

By contrast, in Latin American universities, CRIS usage still tends to operate under a logic of registration rather than strategy. Although there are advances—such as at Universidad de los Andes and Universidad del Pacífico—fragmented policies and limited researcher engagement reduce the potential of these platforms to drive visibility. Similar findings have been reported in regional assessments, which highlight the absence of standardized governance and weak integration of digital infrastructures in research evaluation systems (Schöpfel et al., 2024; Udovičić et al., 2024).

This gap becomes particularly evident in terms of SDG alignment. While UAB demonstrates systemic incorporation of global agendas into its research policies, Latin American institutions exhibit only emerging engagement, often driven by isolated projects rather than institutional mandates. Likewise, the diversity of outputs reveals a similar divide: when only conventional formats are validated, visibility remains restricted to traditional circuits, whereas recognizing broader forms of knowledge production—such as books, software, or public reports—enhances circulation and societal impact (Bordons et al., 2002; Wilsdon et al., 2017; Trial & Einsiedler, 2024).

The presence of extreme values (e.g., UAB's 229,507 outputs and Universidad del Pacífico's 2339 outputs in SDG 17) must be interpreted with caution. These reflect differences in system integration, metadata classification, and data curation rather than purely academic performance. As such, they should not be used as direct benchmarks for Latin American universities. Instead, the focus should be on understanding how institutional practices condition the effectiveness of CRIS platforms.

International collaboration further emerges as a decisive differentiator. The size and geographical distribution of co-authorship networks reflect not only institutional prestige, but also the ability to participate in global epistemic communities. Prior research suggests that universities with stronger international partnerships tend to achieve higher citation impact and legitimacy in research networks (Thelwall, 2016; Thelwall, 2018; Wilsdon et al., 2017). In this regard, CRIS platforms could serve not only to display outputs but also as strategic tools to identify gaps, map collaboration opportunities, and align institutional responses.

Overall, the study highlights that research visibility is a multidimensional construct shaped by technology, governance, policy, and academic culture. CRIS can act as a catalyst, but its effectiveness depends on integration into broader institutional strategies. This suggests that universities—particularly in Latin America—should move beyond viewing CRIS as a repository, and instead embed it into policies of research evaluation, open science, and internationalization. Future efforts should also address the development of researcher training, incentives for broader dissemination, and cross-institutional collaboration.

Beyond the general insights, this study suggests several concrete actions for universities in Latin America to strengthen the role of CRIS platforms. First, institutions should integrate CRIS data into internal evaluation frameworks so that research information informs decision-making, planning, and accountability processes. Second, dedicated training and incentive mechanisms can increase researcher engagement, ensuring that CRIS profiles are regularly updated and enriched. Third, CRIS can be systematically used to monitor contributions to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), thereby supporting evidence-based policy engagement and enhancing societal relevance. Finally, regional collaboration could be fostered by linking CRIS platforms across institutions, enabling benchmarking, joint reporting, and the exchange of governance practices.

Finally, certain limitations must be acknowledged. The analysis relies on data extracted from publicly available CRIS portals, which may be subject to incomplete updating or institutional differences in data curation. Moreover, the study is restricted to four cases, which, while illustrative, do not capture the full diversity of regional experiences. Despite these constraints, the findings provide valuable insights into how institutional conditions shape the effectiveness of CRIS platforms. In conclusion, the study suggests that universities—particularly in Latin America—should not view CRIS merely as administrative repositories, but rather as strategic instruments embedded within policies of research evaluation, open science, and internationalization (Yang et al., 2024). Future research could extend this analysis to additional institutions, incorporate bibliometric indicators, and explore qualitative perspectives such as researcher experiences with CRIS adoption.

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