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Methodology for identification and skills training general management in Higher Education

Metodología de identificación y formación de competencias generales de dirección en Educación Superior

Metodologia para identificação e formação de competências gerais de gestão no Ensino Superior

Abstract

Introduction: based on a prior analysis of competencies, their importance and conceptualization, a methodology is proposed for the identification and development of general managerial competencies in and from the university. The methodology presented is novel, since in Cuba the training of competencies has not yet been established in degree curricula and it constitutes a key link in the formative process within higher education. **Objective:** to propose a methodology for the development of general managerial competencies in university students. **Method:** theoretical and empirical methods were employed within a participatory, flexible, and integrative paradigm. **Results:** the proposed methodology comprises seven main stages and is grounded in a process of analysis, reflection, continuous feedback, and collective construction aimed at its ongoing refinement. **Conclusion:** the foundations for the incorporation of competency training into curricula are established.

Keywords: methodology, competencies, management, training, higher education

Resumen

Introducción: a partir de un análisis previo de las competencias, su importancia y conceptualización, se realiza la propuesta de una Metodología para la identificación y formación de competencias generales de dirección en y desde la universidad. La metodología que se pone a su consideración es una propuesta novedosa, en tanto en Cuba no se establece aun la formación de competencias en los currículos de las carreras y constituye un eslabón clave para su proceso formativo desde la educación superior.

Objetivo: proponer una metodología para la formación de competencias generales de dirección en estudiantes universitarios. **Método:** se emplearon métodos teóricos, empíricos, desde un paradigma participativo, flexible e integrador. **Resultados:** la metodología que se propone consta de siete etapas principales y se establece sobre la base de un proceso de análisis, reflexión, retroalimentación continua y construcción colectiva en aras de su perfeccionamiento permanente. **Conclusión:** se establecen las bases para la formación de competencias en los currículos.

Palabras clave: metodología, competencias, dirección, formación, educación superior

Resumo

Introdução: a partir de uma análise prévia das competências, de sua importância e conceituação, propõe-se uma metodologia para a identificação e formação de competências gerais de direção na e desde a universidade. A metodologia apresentada é inovadora, uma vez que em Cuba a formação por competências ainda não está estabelecida nos currículos dos cursos e constitui um elo-chave para o processo formativo na educação superior. **Objetivo:** propor uma metodologia para a formação de competências gerais de direção em estudantes universitários. **Método:** empregaram-se métodos teóricos e empíricos, a partir de um paradigma participativo, flexível e integrador. **Resultados:** a metodologia proposta consta de sete etapas principais e fundamenta-se em um processo de análise, reflexão, retroalimentação contínua e construção coletiva visando seu aperfeiçoamento permanente. **Conclusão:** estabelecem-se as bases para a inclusão da formação por competências nos currículos.

Palavras-chave: metodología, competencias, dirección, formación, ensino superior



Introduction

At the Regional Conference on Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (CRES, 2008), held in Cartagena de Indias, and at the World Conference on Higher Education (WCHE, 2009), convened in Paris, participants underscored the urgent need for universities to strengthen their academic structures and develop initiatives that ensure equitable access to higher education. Both forums agreed that safeguarding this right requires responding to the growing challenge of educating competent professionals capable of addressing societal needs while contributing to sustainable development.

Professionals educated within higher education institutions are expected to reinforce the sociocultural, technical, scientific, and artistic fabric that underpins development across the countries of the region (UNESCO, 2008; UNESCO, 2009). These conferences also highlighted the importance of fostering ethical and professional values that are manifested in everyday practice, guiding the responsible use of resources and prioritizing collective well-being. Equally emphasized was the need to cultivate competencies that connect academic knowledge with production, work, and social life through a humanistic perspective grounded in intellectual commitment (UNESCO, 2008; UNESCO, 2009).

Participants at CRES 2008 reaffirmed this commitment by stressing the responsibility of shaping a shared and autonomous future. A decade later, the CRES 2018 Declaration reiterated that access to and democratization of knowledge constitute both a social and strategic public good, indispensable for guaranteeing fundamental human rights and promoting the well-being of peoples (UNESCO, 2018). This position calls for a transformation in the ways knowledge is accessed, produced, and applied, assigning universities a central role in renewing modes of thought capable of accompanying broader social transformations.

More recently, the Third Regional Conference on Higher Education (CRES+5, 2024) reaffirmed that the defense of higher education is inseparable from the defense of democracy. Achieving this objective requires consolidating a diverse, inclusive, and humanistic university system that recognizes knowledge as a public good and promotes pluralistic and accessible science (UNESCO, 2024).

These challenges demand profound changes in curricular conceptions and in the design of academic programs, from their initial formulation through implementation. Within this process, faculty members play a pivotal role. Beyond transmitting disciplinary content, they are expected to foster learning, unlearning, and relearning, following Freire's perspective, in order to educate individuals capable of generating knowledge and exercising initiative rather than remaining passive recipients of information.

Human development, as argued by Guía et al. (2022), Güths (2025), Miao and Nduneseokwu (2025), AlQhtani (2025), and Long (2025), constitutes a critical issue because it transforms society and reshapes individuals as social beings. Such transformation also entails profound changes in education, knowledge production, and other dimensions associated with human values that permeate multiple facets of professional life. Likewise, Del Castillo, Monagas, and Mena (2024), together with Khuong et al. (2026), emphasize the need to devise strategic responses to the

accelerated changes occurring in contemporary environments, given their significant effects on organizational processes and future development.

Education is inherently a social phenomenon whose influences entail a commitment to implementing changes aimed at the holistic development of individuals. Within this process, the university becomes a strategic setting for articulating knowledge and values, promoting educational experiences that respond to the social, cultural, and productive needs of surrounding communities. By embracing its ethical and social responsibilities, higher education must ensure that knowledge is translated into transformative practices that strengthen critical citizenship, equity, and collective well-being (UNESCO, 2008, 2009).

Foresight may be understood as a reflective exercise directed toward constructing multiple images of possible futures (Del Castillo et al., 2024). Within contemporary organizations, adopting a strategic outlook has become increasingly essential. Emerging challenges, according to McLeod and Lomas (2023), Montes et al. (2023), and Collado (2025), have intensified the need for proactive management approaches capable of incorporating institutional expectations, goals, and demands.

This perspective requires the development of competencies that prepare professionals more effectively, enabling them to assume responsibilities with higher levels of expertise while integrating knowledge, skills, and personal attributes into efficient professional performance. Consequently, education influences not only the quality of professional practice but also the growth of individuals as social actors.

Universities, as noted by Alarcón et al. (2019), face the formidable challenge of transforming themselves in ways that make meaningful contributions to the comprehensive education of their students. Such transformation entails a profound renewal of academic culture, one that may be difficult to generalize across contexts, yet remains indispensable for opening new horizons. Achieving this objective requires aligning coherent policies with innovative, collectively endorsed strategies involving administrators, faculty, students, staff, and all substantive dimensions of university life.

Foresight can also be conceived as an analytical and reflective process aimed at constructing diverse representations of possible futures, as proposed by Del Castillo et al. (2024). In today's environment, characterized by organizational complexity and constant change, the adoption of a strategic vision has become imperative. Camue, Torres, and Zenea (2024) argue that the effective and efficient functioning of organizational systems represents one of the most complex problems in management science and is closely associated with the ways organizations are internally structured and operated. Institutional challenges, according to McLeod and Lomas (2023), have further reinforced the need to implement proactive management models that integrate the goals, expectations, and needs of each organization.

This context demands the development of competencies that support a more robust professional profile, enabling individuals to assume responsibilities with a high level of preparedness and to perform effectively in practice. Such a process involves integrating multiple components and personality traits oriented toward

efficient performance, thereby influencing both career trajectories and individual growth as social subjects.

Within this framework, universities are challenged to transform themselves in order to respond meaningfully to the demands of comprehensive student education. As Alarcón et al. (2019) argue, this transformation requires a profound renewal of academic culture capable of generating substantive changes that, although not easily generalized, must be articulated through coherent institutional policies. These policies should be directed toward new horizons and supported by innovative, inclusive, and consensus-based strategies that engage administrators, faculty members, students, staff, and all essential functions of the institution.

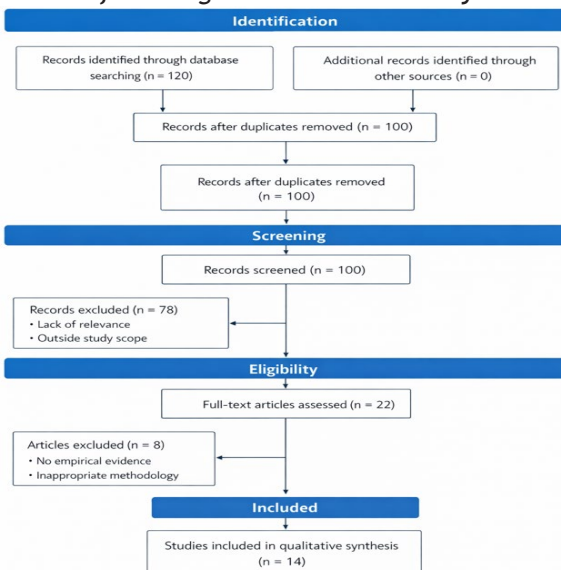
Methods and materials

The proposed methodology was grounded in theoretical and empirical methods within a participatory, flexible, and integrative paradigm. A qualitative study was conducted based on documentary analysis and complemented by a systematic review following the PRISMA methodology. National and international databases were consulted, applying inclusion criteria that considered publications published between 2015 and 2025, written in Spanish or English, and focused on the development of managerial competencies. Exclusion criteria included studies lacking empirical evidence or addressing issues unrelated to educational and organizational contexts (Figure 1).

The search process initially identified 120 articles, of which 78 were excluded because of duplication or insufficient relevance. Ultimately, 22 studies were retained for analysis. This procedure ensured methodological rigor and transparency while integrating both classical and contemporary contributions. In turn, it strengthened the proposal by highlighting the relevance of managerial competency development in both university and organizational settings.

Figure 1

PRISMA flow diagram used in the study



Source: Authors' own elaboration.

Analysis of the 22 selected studies revealed significant trends and gaps in the literature on managerial competency development in higher education and organizational contexts. Overall, the reviewed studies were concentrated around three predominant approaches:

- Traditional leadership models emphasizing technical and administrative competencies, with limited attention to socio-emotional and ethical dimensions.
- Functional training methodologies aimed at solving immediate problems but lacking comprehensive integration with long-term educational processes.
- Experiential learning and coaching initiatives that, despite their innovative character, remain insufficiently systematized and supported by robust empirical validation.

The most notable gaps identified were:

- The absence of holistic approaches integrating pedagogical, research, ethical, and socio-emotional competencies.
- Limited empirical evidence regarding program effectiveness, as many studies rely primarily on conceptual descriptions without impact indicators.
- Insufficient contextualization within Latin American realities, with a predominance of models imported from Anglo-Saxon contexts.

These findings made it possible to identify distinctive aspects associated with management, its formative process, and the sequencing of methodological stages. The choice of a qualitative design was justified by the need to gain an in-depth understanding of educational and organizational phenomena beyond mere quantification, privileging interpretation, collective knowledge construction, and the generation of context-specific inferences. The authors' experience, together with active participation and collective construction, guided the development of the methodology and reinforced the relevance of managerial competency development.

The proposed methodology addresses these gaps by adopting a participatory, flexible, and contextualized approach that integrates technical and transversal competencies with community practice and applied research. Its principal contribution lies in the systemic integration of diverse formative dimensions and in the incorporation of empirical and theoretical validation processes from the earliest stages.

Results and discussion

The concept of competency entails the integration of a broad range of individual characteristics that extend beyond technical knowledge and specific skills. These characteristics include motivation, personal identity, and cognitive capacities, all of which enable individuals to appropriately apply acquired skills as

part of a behavioral repertoire oriented toward professional performance.

According to González Rivero (2022), professional competency should be understood as a complex personal structure resulting from the interaction among multiple factors converging throughout the learning process. This process integrates theoretical and practical content with psychological components, generating an integrated mode of functioning directed toward effective professional practice.

As González Rivero (2022) further argues, this dynamic does not preclude the incorporation of previously consolidated elements. Within this framework, the core content of competency is the professional mode of action and its external expression, professional performance, although these concepts are not equivalent.

The professional mode of action encompasses both internal and external elements. Observable behaviors are expressed through professional performance, whereas internal components, such as mental models and ideas, determine such performance. Competency integrates multiple dimensions and therefore cannot be reduced to a single component. Competency configurations are shaped by the nature of the activity toward which they are directed, thereby imposing specific requirements. Nevertheless, their assessment cannot be limited exclusively to performance indicators or achieved outcomes, as noted by Tobón (2023).

Although competencies have been widely adopted within educational settings, no consensus has yet emerged regarding their theoretical foundations, determining conditions, or modes of implementation and evaluation, which poses substantial challenges for their use.

Competencies are conceived as the result of teaching and practice within a continuous developmental process. As they are progressively manifested, they become more firmly structured and reach higher levels of cohesion, directly influencing performance quality. Consequently, competencies should be approached from a comprehensive and holistic perspective that is contextualized and subject to ongoing refinement.

According to García, Cisneros, and García (2025), competency may be defined as the dynamic integration of knowledge, skills, values, attitudes, and abilities expressed across diverse and constantly changing socio-occupational settings. Such integration materializes through the application of experiences and fundamental principles associated with knowing, knowing how to do, knowing how to be, entrepreneurial competence, and the ability to share and coexist collectively within academic, professional, and social environments.

This perspective highlights the need to promote students' active and leading role within the teaching-learning process, while recognizing the time required to achieve the competencies established in professional profiles. Consequently, competency should be regarded as the organizing axis of curricular design and improvement.

Within the proposed framework, general managerial competencies are conceived as the synergistic integration of knowledge, skills, values, attitudes, and behaviors deployed across different socio-occupational contexts. These competencies are essential for effective comprehensive management and for

fostering creative and innovative solutions in productive and service sectors through the efficient use of material, human, and financial resources via planning, organization, regulation, and control processes.

According to Stoner (2018), the term synergistic refers to the interaction and integration of all elements constituting a competency. However, García, Cisneros, and García (2025) argue that general managerial competencies cannot be understood uniformly, since they acquire specific nuances according to contextual demands, emerging interactions, and individuals' capacities. Their development requires moving beyond the mere accumulation of knowledge or skills by positioning students at the center of their activities and relationships as protagonists of their own learning and development.

In this regard, organizational and contextual needs within which future professionals will operate must be considered, since competencies acquire meaning only in relation to individuals' possibilities for action. Within this interaction, mediated by perceptions and self-perceptions, internal tensions emerge that stimulate self-development.

García, Cisneros, and García (2025) maintain that managerial competencies should be developed within and through the group, taking into account students' interests, motivations, and needs. Students are simultaneously influenced and enriched by their environments at macro-, meso-, and micro-levels, including the university and its academic setting, enterprises and teaching units, and the broader socio-community context in which they live and develop. All of these settings constitute essential links in competency development during university education.

Theoretical foundations of the methodology for developing general managerial competencies

The methodology designed for developing general managerial competencies is grounded in a set of premises, principles, and scientific ideas that provide theoretical coherence and conceptual support. Premises, understood as initial conditions guiding methodological reasoning, constitute indispensable elements for implementing any educational proposal. Following Ochoa et al. (2023), premises may be viewed as the basis of a judgment, condition, or factor influencing process implementation.

The premises underpinning the present methodology are as follows:

- The willingness of the National Program Committee to introduce adjustments into professional training programs, recognizing the importance of general managerial competencies for graduates' future performance.
- The willingness of the teaching staff to implement the strategy by engaging in planning, organization, implementation, monitoring, and feedback processes while fostering a favorable pedagogical climate for competency development.
- Students' motivation and recognition of the importance of developing general managerial competencies.

According to Ramos et al. (2018), the term principle is conceived as a foundation, starting point, or essential norm. In scientific and academic production, its use is frequent and presented under various meanings: as a guiding rule of conduct, as a structural basis of a system, as a central notion that allows generalizing and extending a proposition to phenomena in a specific domain, and even as the particular maxims that guide each individual's actions.

In the field of social and pedagogical sciences, principles must be assumed as requirements of great relevance, given that theories constructed in these areas express ideas and elaborations oriented toward "good practice" and the search for adequate practices.

From this conception, three fundamental principles are recognized that act as regulators and dynamizers of the general management competency development process. These principles are detailed below:

- Principle of the systemic character of formative process components. The development of general management competencies is conceived as a system in which each component maintains a relationship of interdependence. The interaction among these elements, together with the flow of information and the procedures that allow the conscious execution of general and specific management functions, constitutes an essential factor for achieving the objectives foreseen in the different academic and socio-labor scenarios where students participate.
- Principle of the contextual character in competency development. This principle is oriented toward ensuring that the educational process develops in a contextualized manner, attending to the particularities of the productive and service sphere. Within this framework, general management competencies are articulated both in the academic and labor and research domains, integrating curricular and extracurricular dimensions. In this way, a comprehensive analysis of production and service processes is favored, in correspondence with the specific characteristics of each context in which these competencies are put into practice.
- Principle of the unity between activity, teaching, and development. Connection with practice constitutes the central axis of this principle. Through sequenced actions derived from the program's professional mode of action and the management of production and service processes, conscious and meaningful learning is favored. Teaching and development are integrated as dialectical pairs in the development of general management competencies, considering academic, labor, and research dimensions. This unique process of transforming reality contributes to the comprehensive preparation of professionals capable of effectively facing the challenges of their performance.

Scientific ideas underpinning the strategy

According to García, Cisneros, and García (2025), scientific ideas can be understood as coherent perceptions and theoretical norms that articulate conceptual references or action guidelines, constituting the basis upon which a strategy is founded and legitimized. These ideas not only guide the process but also

guarantee its internal coherence and relevance in relation to formative objectives.

In this sense, the scientific ideas supporting the general management competency development strategy are expressed as follows:

- Management as a transversal axis of the degree program, grounded in the professional modes of action specific to the profession, ensuring its presence in all dimensions of the formative process.
- Management functions as support for general competencies, establishing a close relationship between managerial tasks and the development of said competencies.
- Development of general management competencies from and within the group, recognizing the collective and collaborative character of learning as an indispensable condition for their consolidation.
- Articulation between curricular and extracurricular dimensions, where the development of general management competencies is strengthened through the integration of academic, labor, and research experiences.

Methodology for designing the general management competency development strategy

The integration achieved through its distinct phases allows for the conception and structuring of a systematic and articulated methodology for developing general management competencies in higher education students. Coherence among the defined steps facilitates both the identification and development of these competencies, making their execution indispensable for designing strategies and guaranteeing their practical application.

According to De Armas (2014), methodology is understood as the way of proceeding to achieve certain objectives, resorting to procedures that, organized and linked in a specific manner, constitute an integral system that transcends the application of an isolated method.

Galarza and Almuiñas (2023) highlight that methodology constitutes the main contribution of research, defining it as a "set of methods, procedures, and techniques that, regulated by certain requirements, allow ordering thought and modes of action with the purpose of generating new knowledge in the study of a theoretical problem or in the solution of a practical problem."

In line with this perspective, it is agreed that methodology is grounded in a theoretical body, contributes to problem-solving, and is organized in successive, conditioned, and interdependent phases that lead to the achievement of stated purposes through a logical system of procedures. Also drawing on contributions from García et al. (2014), its general characteristics are made explicit, thus consolidating the conceptual basis supporting the strategy.

The proposed methodology distinguishes seven main stages:

A. Internal and external diagnosis.

B. Definition of strategic objective.

C. Proposal of specific strategies.

- Competency identification.
- Implementation through training phases.
- Curricular management strategy.
- Student training.
- Pedagogical team training.

D. Theoretical validation.

E. Definition of strategic actions.

F. Execution of the designed methodology.

G. Evaluation, socialization, and control of results.

These proposed stages are perceived from the standpoint of flexibility, participation, and contextualization; adjusting and providing feedback based on the interests, motivations, and conditions that regulate and dynamize the process for its continuous improvement (García et al., 2014).

For the methodology's implementation, various methods and techniques are employed, whose results constitute essential elements for both its development and continuity. Among them, group work, discussion dynamics, workshops, as well as exchange and collective construction sessions stand out, all of which contribute significantly to enriching the methodological process.

A. Internal and external diagnosis

The diagnosis begins with contextual analysis, establishing the main contextual manifestations, considering the local, university, and socio-labor environment, as well as the agencies and employing companies where students and future graduates are linked from the beginning of their university life.

The diagnosis at this stage of the research is vitally important in identifying the existing conditioning driving forces for implementing the strategy, as well as its structuring considering the criteria of the professors and students involved in the process, which was conducted through a group consultation with program faculty and students.

Consequently, both an internal and external diagnosis is carried out. The internal diagnosis allows for the identification of the main strengths and weaknesses affecting the general management competency development process. For this purpose, the criteria of the national degree program commission, faculty assessments, student perceptions, and the material and financial conditions available in the program are considered.

The external diagnosis, meanwhile, is oriented toward determining the opportunities and threats present in the environment, taking as reference the characteristics of the agencies and companies where students develop their practices and interactions. This comprehensive analysis makes it possible to

recognize the internal and external factors conditioning the development of general management competencies, offering a more complete vision for planning and executing the strategy.

In analyzing the environment, it is also necessary to consider:

- Normative bases and current regulations.
- National guidelines and policies.
- Study plans.
- National regulations for student insertion into work placements.
- Conditions of agencies to accept and attend to students in placements.
- Situation of companies as training scenarios, quality of teaching units, among others.

Because these trace directives and establish the lines to follow

Conducting the group consultation with program faculty and students allows for obtaining the SWOT matrix, which proves highly useful in determining the strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities present for designing the proposed strategy.

In the strategy design process, four fundamental categories are identified: strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities.

- **Strengths:** these are positive aspects that can become support points for enhancing institutional work, taking advantage of opportunities and reducing the impact of threats in fulfilling the organizational mission and vision (García et al., 2014).
- **Weaknesses:** these constitute critical points that must be overcome to achieve higher levels of effectiveness in fulfilling the institutional mission and vision. They are conceived as areas susceptible to improvement that, with adequate management, can be transformed into future strengths (García et al., 2014).
- **Threats:** these refer to phenomena, events, or environmental trends over which one has no direct influence capacity and that can negatively affect the fulfillment of the institutional mission (García et al., 2014).
- **Opportunities:** these comprise phenomena, trends, or events present in the environment that, while not depending on the institution's direct action, can be strategically leveraged to favor the fulfillment of the mission and vision (García et al., 2014).

The identification of these elements constitutes the starting point for developing the proposed strategy, by enabling a comprehensive analysis of the internal and external factors conditioning the development of general management competencies. This process provides a solid foundation for structuring coherent actions and ensuring that the strategy responds effectively to the particularities of

the context in which it unfolds.

B. Definition of strategic objective

The internal and external analysis of the context allows for determining the objective(s) of the strategy.

C. Proposal of specific strategies

Specific strategies are designed and agreed upon jointly with the national degree program commission, taking the diagnostic results and comprehensive environmental analysis as reference. No modification of the formally established curriculum or official degree program documents is proposed; however, an adaptation of the practical curriculum is proposed, oriented toward strengthening the development of general management competencies.

These actions are directed toward training the pedagogical team to assume the formative process, preparing students through specialized workshops, designing a transversal curricular strategy in management matters, and articulating curricular and extracurricular dimensions, ensuring coherence and relevance in comprehensive formation.

- Competency identification.

Competency identification constitutes an essential step within the methodology, and for this purpose, an ordered sequence of actions is followed. The first moment corresponds to theoretical analysis, which implies an exhaustive review of official documents, study plans, professional modes and spheres of action, as well as the professional profile and the types of competencies intended to be developed.

This analysis is grounded in the theoretical foundations that legitimize competency development, also considering proposals made by various authors, their selection criteria, and current trends in the academic and professional spheres. At this stage, the researcher's role proves decisive, as their theoretical position and interpretive capacity constitute the basis for guiding the process of identifying general management competencies.

The second moment starts from a contextual analysis (considering historical evolution, trends, and regularities of the degree program).

The third moment includes group work and session discussion (conducted in spaces established by the program: year-group meetings, discipline meetings, program meetings, and the main integrating discipline meetings).

The fourth moment corresponds to conducting workshops and exchanges for the analysis and validation of proposals. These activities are distinguished by their systematicity, frequency, and planning, although they may also be conducted on an extraordinary basis when circumstances require it, following a punctual assessment of the situation. Each of these spaces is organized in coordination with the program commission and teaching staff, who contribute highly valuable criteria to the process.

Therefore, it is essential to work jointly in selecting the proposed competencies and their subsequent breakdown. Within this framework, constant

exchange and continuous feedback with the program become key elements for ensuring the relevance and coherence of the general management competencies intended to be developed.

There is no defined number of competencies; those necessary will be defined and established, and the program commission together with the researcher will decide which and how many will be developed.

The proposed general management competencies are structured into various interrelated components, namely:

- **Specific knowledge:** this comprises the theoretical and practical knowledge indispensable for exercising management in different academic, labor, and research contexts.
- **Skills and abilities:** these refer to the technical, cognitive, and procedural capacities that enable the effective application of knowledge in management practice.
- **Values:** these constitute ethical and professional principles that guide the responsible and committed action of students in the exercise of managerial functions.
- **Behaviors:** these express the forms of action that reflect the internalization of acquired competencies, evidencing coherence between what is learned and what is executed.
- **Attitudes:** these imply the personal and professional disposition to assume with responsibility, initiative, and leadership the tasks linked to the management process.

These components allow for comprehensive and coherent formation throughout the entire process.

- Implementation through training phases.

Each of the proposed phases, in their interrelation, establishes the necessary actions for their execution. According to García et al. (2014), phases are conceived as a process of sequencing and articulated succession, whose purpose is to guarantee the achievement of expected results.

An essential aspect for understanding the development of management competencies is recognizing that these are developed in practice, from practice, and for performance in practice. Managerial activity is concretized in the very exercise of management, where the professional puts into action acquired knowledge, technical skills, values, and modes of action that constitute their preparation, both in the academic sphere and in the experience of managing processes linked to the service provided to society.

As noted by Ochoa et al. (2023), management constitutes an eminently social activity. In it, collective work is oriented, and influence is exercised in a conscious, planned, systematic, and stable manner, with the aim of achieving proposed goals. This process is inseparable from communication, which is recognized as the essence

of managerial activity itself, being the medium that enables coordination, interaction, and collective construction of results.

Management is expressed in a dynamic where its structural and functional qualities intermingle and interact, where competencies are highlighted, processes of structuring and restructuring materialize, and quantitative and qualitative transitions occur, formed and demonstrated in practice, where organizational culture is key to performance.

In line with Stoner (2018), becoming an effective manager requires interaction with other managers and observation of their practices. This process implies, in the first instance, performing as a good subordinate, since the experience acquired in that position constitutes the basis for understanding managerial dynamics and developing the competencies necessary to exercise management effectively.

From this conception, it becomes imperative to intentionally foster competency development from the university, linking students to production and service activities in their specialties. In this, the relationship among formative, research, and extension activities is important, marking that interrelation that contributes to the modes of action in the degree programs and consequently to competency development through sequenced, intentional actions nuanced by the curricular and extracurricular dimensions in the program.

The specific training phases are concretized in a progressive sequence that accompanies students' academic development throughout the entire degree program, allowing competencies to be strengthened gradually and coherently in correspondence with each formative stage, under the coordination of the Main Integrating Discipline (MID). These phases are structured as follows:

- Training phase I: Comprises the first and second year of the degree program, oriented toward the initial acquisition of general management competencies and familiarization with the professional modes of action specific to the profession.
- Training phase II: Encompasses the third year, focused on consolidating acquired competencies and their practical application in academic, labor, and research scenarios.
- Training phase III: Corresponds to the fourth and fifth year of the degree program (where applicable), focused on the full integration of general management competencies, with emphasis on autonomous performance and preparation for professional practice.

From the coordination by the Main Integrating Discipline in each academic year, the dynamics of the subjects are framed in order to respond to general management competencies; in connection with each academic year and the disciplines to which the subjects correspond, according to the degree program's objective. All of this is rooted in the relationship with practice and the integration between teaching, research, and extension as university processes necessarily linked to the formation of these students as future professionals and potential managers.

Training phase I

Following the redesigns of Cuban degree programs, reducing them to four years, this phase covers the first year, where students are familiarized with the program, modes and spheres of action, entities where they may work, and other generic aspects. In this way, they identify the main regularities, needs, importance, and typical issues of the program, in direct connection with the profession and the university-society relationship.

In this phase, group work, participation, and relationships among students, between the group and its connection with professors, production and service specialists are fostered. Likewise, it is integrated through planning, organization, regulation, and control of undertaken actions.

Training phase II

This covers the second year of the degree program, focused mainly on the projection and socialization of results obtained from the integration of teaching, research, and extension processes and their insertion into production and service practices in direct connection with their degree programs.

In this case, students must become directly familiar with the professional mode of action; this stage constitutes the core of the university formative process and, consequently, maintains direct connection with professional practice. The development of management competencies is intentionally favored with a comprehensive approach, based on the experiences and activities carried out, both at the university and in work placements, all in real entities.

Training phase III

The formative process comprises the fourth year of the degree program and, in those programs that include it, also the fifth year. This stage is globally articulated with the comprehensive evaluation of the managerial function, favoring that, based on production and service references, the state of development of management competencies is assessed. In this context, leadership is promoted as an essential trait in conducting academic and professional processes.

Throughout the different subjects and disciplines that make up the study plan, faculty direct their work toward strengthening management functions, understood as the basis for developing the foreseen competencies. At this stage, these functions are articulated coherently and complementarily, favoring the consolidation of a comprehensive professional profile.

Likewise, from the various socialization spaces offered by the program, specific actions are promoted aimed at intentionally fostering the development of these competencies, thus consolidating a comprehensive professional profile.

- Curricular management strategy.

This intentionally guides the students' formative process toward the development of general management competencies, contributing to consolidating their preparation based on the modes of action they put into practice.

- Student training.

This fosters the strengthening of general management competency development in students from the different learning spaces.

- Pedagogical team training.

For developing general management competencies in students, it is essential that professors are prepared in this regard.

D. Theoretical validation

Once conceived and put into practice, the strategy is subjected to a validation process through the criteria of previously selected experts. It is then implemented in the formative context to verify its feasibility and examine the achievements obtained by students in developing general management competencies within the degree program.

E. Definition of strategic actions

At this phase, it is essential to identify the elements that guarantee the materialization of the stated transformations, which are aimed at strengthening general management competencies, conceived as a fundamental axis for the comprehensive development of professional formation. This requires the implementation of a set of actions designed to favor its implementation.

These actions must be designed with criteria of systematicity, updating, and contextualization, in addition to incorporating continuous feedback processes, according to the development of general management competencies. Likewise, they must be nourished from the different interaction spaces and the articulation established between the university and the business sector.

They will be directly related to the year's objectives, the characteristics of each phase, and in close connection with the degree program. These strategic actions are the concrete steps taken to achieve objectives and fulfill the established strategy. Each action will be interconnected and aligned with the development of management competencies and the particular degree program, as well as with environmental analysis, guiding the course toward achieving the objective.

It is important to specify that these strategic actions must be clear, specific, measurable, and realistic, to ensure their effectiveness in implementation.

Strategic actions are articulated both in the productive and service sphere and in the academic, research, and university extension activities of the degree program. This connection is established in direct relationship with the professional mode of action and the management competency development process.

F. Execution of the designed methodology

Collaboration with the national degree program commission represents a key element for putting the strategy into practice, making it pertinent to consolidate links with this body from the initial stages of the research. Creativity, motivation, dedication, and collective learning converge in this process, reinforcing its viability. Likewise, the development of general management competencies cannot be separated from budgetary analysis, as this determines the feasibility, adjustment, and availability of human, labor, and financial resources indispensable for

guaranteeing strategy execution. The identification of these aspects must be incorporated into planning from the outset, also evidencing the social contributions derived from its implementation.

G. Evaluation, socialization, and control of results

Validation is situated at this point in the process because it constitutes a bridge between methodological construction and final results evaluation. In this context, theoretical validation is understood as the contrast of the proposal with existing conceptual and empirical references, as well as with expert criteria, guaranteeing its pertinence and coherence before full application.

This type of validation fulfills three functions:

1. Ensuring internal consistency, verifying that methodological components are articulated logically and systemically.
2. Guaranteeing external relevance, by contrasting the proposal with real needs of the university and organizational context.
3. Preparing the final evaluation, as it establishes the conceptual and methodological bases that will allow measuring results with previously defined indicators.

In this way, theoretical validation does not substitute results evaluation but articulates with it as an indispensable prior stage that grants legitimacy and credibility to the formative process.

During the different phases of the managerial cycle (planning, organization, regulation, and control), integrally linked to academic and formative performance, progress in the development of general management competencies is assessed. In this line, the assertions by Alarcón et al. (2019) are taken up, who warn that in Cuba, formation oriented toward, from, and for process management is not explicit. Nevertheless, achieving practice coherent with this perspective requires preparing professionals with greater commitment, autonomy, flexibility, and versatility, aware of their social and professional context, and capable of deploying high levels of creativity in problem-solving and attending to concrete situations.

Evaluation and feedback must be conceived as continuous and systematic processes present throughout the entire formation, as they provide valuable information for improvement and implementation in subsequent stages. This evaluation must cover the different moments, processes, levels, participants, and contexts involved, employing a diversity of instruments that allow approaching the objective reality of learning (Alarcón et al., 2019). The essential thing is that the data obtained are integrated into the individual's consciousness so that they can be utilized both by themselves and by the academic community in general.

An essential component of the evaluative process is the socialization of results within the university sphere. Timely dissemination and effective communication of findings to involved, interested, and target actors favor their understanding and enhance their practical application. For this purpose, various strategies may be employed, including exchange meetings, collaborative workshops,

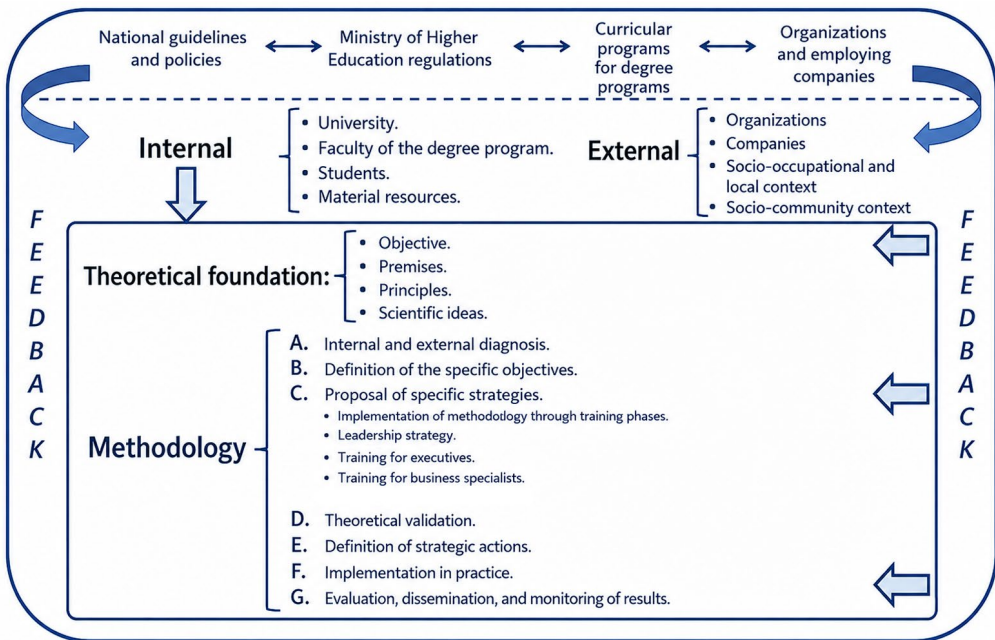
scientific sessions with collective debates, oral presentations, visual displays, and printed materials synthesizing the main results and learnings derived from the evaluation.

However, evaluation and socialization of results are not sufficient on their own. In implementing the general management competency development strategy, along with its specific actions, continuous control and feedback are required. This phase constitutes the central axis of feedback, since, although the evaluative process develops permanently, at this stage it is conducted with greater intentionality, favoring continuous improvement and potentially generating new contextual demands that must be considered.

The proposed methodology is conceived and structured as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2

Methodology designed for the identification and development of management competencies in Higher Education



Source: Authors' own elaboration.

The fundamental mission of higher education institutions centers on forming a new generation of professionals who, in addition to achieving solid mastery of competencies specific to their disciplinary field, act with a humanistic sense and perform as leaders. In the current context of globalization and communication, this implies acquiring knowledge, skills, and abilities that respond to social demands linked to professional practice (Moreno & de Armas, 2019).

Within this framework, the identification and development of general management competencies in higher education emerges as both a necessity and a challenge. This process marks the starting point for having better-prepared

professionals, both in their specialty domain and in the management of production and service processes, in close relation to their modes of action and the indissoluble articulation between university and society.

Conclusions

The study addresses the conceptualization of competencies and, in particular, general management competencies, conceived as an articulating axis of formative processes in higher education. Based on this analysis, a methodology structured in seven stages for the identification and development of said competencies is designed, ensuring a participatory and contextualized approach. Likewise, the foundations for their incorporation into Cuban degree program curricula are established, so that the methodological proposal contributes to strengthening the social and professional relevance of university formation.

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Declaration of author responsibility

Máryuri García González 1: Conceptualization, Data Curation, Formal Analysis, Investigation, Methodology, Resources, Software, Supervision, Validation/Verification, Visualization, Writing/Original Draft, and Writing/Review & Editing.

Alfredo García Rodríguez 2: Formal analysis, Validation/Verification, Original draft preparation, and Writing.

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