Methodology for the development of essential management skills from tourism training

Metodología para el desarrollo de habilidades directivas esenciales desde la formación turística

Metodologia para o desenvolvimento de competências essenciais de gestão desde a educação turística

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ABSTRACT

The development of essential management skills through the development processes promoted by the managers of Higher Education Institutions linked to the training of managers of tourism, travel and hospitality activities, constitutes a challenge since the methodologies that have been established in this sense are currently insufficient. Therefore, it is necessary to propose the theoretical-methodological bases, as well as the definition of methodological components and budgets for its continuous improvement in higher education. Therefore, this paper is oriented to the design of a methodology for the development of essential management skills in tourism education, using different

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tools, among which workshops and questionnaires stand out. The strategic diagnosis of the current situation of these managers and their influence on the future managers of the activity in the sector and the academy allowed the identification of the variables that condition the design, as well as the regularities of the same. A methodology for the development of essential management skills is then proposed, based on three components and four fundamental steps.

Keywords: development; essential management skills; methodology; budgeting

RESUMEN

El desarrollo de habilidades directivas esenciales a través de los procesos de desarrollo promovidos por los directivos de las Instituciones de Educación Superior vinculadas a la formación de gestores de las actividades del turismo, los viajes y la hospitalidad, constituye un reto ya que en la actualidad son insuficientes las metodologías que se han establecido en tal sentido. Por ello, se hace necesario proponer las bases teórico-metodológicas, así como la definición de componentes y presupuestos metodológicos para su mejora continua en la educación superior. Por ello, la presente se orienta al diseño de una metodología para el desarrollo de habilidades directivas esenciales desde la formación en turismo, empleando distintas herramientas entre las que se destacan los talleres y los cuestionarios. El diagnóstico estratégico de la situación actual de estos directivos y su influencia en los futuros gestores de la actividad en el sector y la academia permitieron la identificación de las variables que condicionan el diseño, así como las regularidades del mismo. Se propone entonces una metodología para el desarrollo de habilidades directivas esenciales, a partir de tres componentes y cuatro etapas fundamentales.

Palabras clave: desarrollo; habilidades directivas esenciales; metodología; presupuestos

RESUMO

O desenvolvimento das competências essenciais de gestão através dos processos de desenvolvimento promovidos pelos diretivos das instituições do Ensino Superior ligadas à formação de gestores das atividades do turismo, as viagens e as atividades hoteleiras, é um desafio, pois na atualidade as metodologias estabelecidas neste respeito são deficientes. Por conseguinte, é necessário propor as bases teórico-metodológicas, bem como a definição de componentes metodológicas e orçamentos para a sua melhoria contínua no ensino superior. Portanto, este documento está orientado para a concepção de uma metodologia para o desenvolvimento de competências essenciais de gestão da educação turística, utilizando diferentes ferramentas entre as quais se destacam jornadas e questionários. O diagnóstico estratégico da situação atual destes gestores e a sua influência sobre os futuros gestores da atividade no sector e na academia permitiu identificar as variáveis que condicionam o desenho, bem como as regularidades do mesmo. É então proposta, uma metodologia para o desenvolvimento de competências essenciais de gestão, baseada em três componentes e quatro fases fundamentais.

Palavras-chave: desenvolvimento; competências essenciais de gestão; metodologia; orçamentos

INTRODUCTION

The process of developing management skills should be a reflection of the work associated with management positions, which demand a deep interaction with subordinates and collaborators in the execution of tasks. The term management skills is gaining more and more importance due to its facilities for the professional development of managers, being considered as the acquisition of differentiating elements applicable in any sphere of knowledge.

Katz (1974) defines management skills, in a first approach, as knowledge acquired to successfully deal with problems that can be repeated over time. Therefore, each management skill is learned with time and practice and can be repeated years later.

The methodology, according to Fernández (2011), is the set of elements that, regulated by certain requirements, establish and support the sequence of actions to be developed and the explanation of how to proceed to achieve the knowledge and/or transformation of an object, in this case essential management skills.

For Loyola and Tristá (2017), the experiences around management skills should be thought of, even in other extra-institutional spaces, since the current demands on higher education require skills and perspectives different from those that were the basis for the success of previous generations of managers.

In the specific case of management skills, it is not enough to learn theoretical content from management books, since essential management skills must be supported by methodologies for their implementation.

The methodology must be flexible so that it can be contextualized and implemented in other higher education institutions. For this reason, we also work on development as a category of training.

For Tejada and Ruiz (2016), development is the training process that guarantees the gradual and ascending increase of essential management skills through specific organizational activities. This position is assumed by the authors of this paper.

Cobo (2012) provides a definition where management skills are identified with knowledge that a person needs to perform activities oriented to future leadership.

In Higher Education Institutions (HEI), the organization embodies the context where the manager develops his knowledge to generate social benefits determined by the formation of essential management skills.

In the Latin American and Cuban context, a poor state has been reached in the contributions to the term essential management skills. It is Codina (2016) who, from his role as a researcher at the Center for the Study of Management Techniques (CETED), at the University of Havana, makes the greatest contributions to a definition, conceiving it as the set of knowledge that allows relating to the environment and designing strategies.

For Agolla and Van Lill (2013), essential management skills are guaranteed by the development of specific knowledge for success around management.

Essential management skills are determined by the accumulation of one's own experiences to turn knowledge into action and achieve favorable results in HEI (Ascón Villa & García González, 2018).

The authors define essential management skills according to the criteria of Ascón, García and Pedraza (2018), stating that they are groups of specific knowledge, manifested in the performance of managers, developed and updated since their training due to their need for personal and group, self and society's fulfillment.

The term "methodology" is very often used in management practice and theory; however, determining its scope is complex. It is defined as the way of proceeding to achieve the objectives, by means of which methodological procedures are used which, ordered and linked in a particular way, form a systemic whole.

For their part, Camacho, García and Pell (2020) consider that the methodology must have a cognitive, communicative and sociocultural approach for training and development through a gradual and sequenced construction.

For Guzmán (2017) at the most general level, the term methodology is represented as a philosophical discipline, relatively autonomous, which deals with the analysis of one or several sciences and is defined as the philosophical study of the methods of knowledge and transformation of reality, the application of the principles of the conception of the world to the process of knowledge, of spiritual creation in general or to practice. While on a particular level, it is an integral part of one or more sciences, it includes the set of methods, procedures and techniques that respond to the characteristics of that (those) science (s) and allow to know more and better the object of study. On a more specific level, it is a system of methods, procedures and techniques, which, regulated by certain requirements, allow to better order the thinking and way of acting in order to obtain certain cognitive purposes.

The authors rely on the definition of methodology by Galarza López and Almuiñas Rivero (2018), by proposing it as the support of a theoretical body, which contributes to the

solution of a problem and its structuring is carried out taking into account various conditioning, dependent and successive phases or stages that lead to the achievement of certain purposes through a logical system of procedures.

García et al. (2014), assume Fernández (2011) when stating that the analysis carried out in relation to the criteria assumed by researchers of other sciences allows identifying a methodology as a scientific result in research on management, with the following features:

- It is a relatively stable result obtained in a process of scientific research
- It responds to an objective of management theory and/or practice
- It is based on a theoretical body (categorical and legal) of the different disciplines that make up the science of management, as well as other sciences and branches of knowledge that are related to the objective for which the methodology is designed
- It is a logical process, made up of interconnected stages and/or steps that, ordered in a particular way, allow the achievement of the proposed objective
- Each of the stages includes a system of procedures that are conditioning and dependent on each other and that are logically ordered in a specific way
- It has a flexible character, although it responds to a logical order

Therefore, the general elements that integrate a methodology as a scientific result in research are evidenced. The authors Ascón, García and Pedraza (2018) identify that there are few, at present, methodologies used to develop management skills, collecting in this order, at the international level, the following which are the most extended ones:

MSAI Methodology: Management Skills Assessment Instrument (MSAI), developed by Lee Collett and Carlos Mora. MSAI is used in the University of Michigan Management Program for university managers, who have to perform with a high component of management situations, in which they must apply knowledge and skills.

ISMU Methodology: Management skills assessment instrument for University Managers Updating, training topics, gender culture and uncertainty situations that must be handled by managers in HEI, which is used in the Management Program of the

University of Catalonia for university managers, based on three major clusters that group together the essential management skills to be assessed.

In both cases, the approaches are limited and do not apply an integrative perspective.

For this reason, the present study proposes the following **general objective**: To design a methodology for the development of essential management skills in tourism education.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present research is "descriptive" because the methodological assumptions of the methodology are characterized. In the same way, according to the approached procedure, it can be classified as "action-research" because it starts from the existing reality.

According to ISO 9000:(2015), a procedure is the specific way to carry out an activity or a process. While the process is the set of mutually related activities that transform input elements into results. Understand as a fundamental result the design of the methodology.

For this purpose, the following theoretical methods were used:

Historical-logical: enables the study of the antecedents, development, regularities and current trends in management, as well as the essential management skills in correspondence with the proposed result.

Analytical-synthetic: facilitates the mental fragmentation of the elements that typify the essential management skills and their relationship with leadership in order to establish distinctive features and, in turn, integrate them as a whole, which makes it possible to discover the relationships between their components and the characteristics of their descriptors.

Inductive-deductive: facilitates the way to systematize various theories on essential management skills and their relevance for the interpretation of the data emanating from the study in the diagnosis and its practical usefulness.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The main phases of the procedure used for the design of the methodology are described
below.

1. Determination of participating managers

Twenty-five managers were selected with experience in tourism, travel and hospitality
training and, therefore, with interest in the research topic, scientific and/or teaching
category of doctor of science and full professor, with extensive experience in the field of
tourism. A chronogram is then drawn up with the schedule of workshops that were
developed according to the design of the methodology.

2. Socialization of the theoretical elements established in research and the regularities of the diagnosis in managers

A presentation was prepared with the theoretical aspects that are established for the
development of essential management skills, as well as the elements that favor and limit
them obtained from the diagnosis of managers for the design of the methodology. The
methodological assumptions elaborated are presented, with the objective of organizing
the development of essential management skills. Then, the first workshop is developed
in order to, through exchanges, propose the necessary stages to contribute to the
theoretical foundation of the methodology. The discussion is recorded for later analysis
and systematization of the proposals.

3. Conducting the strategic analysis

In the second workshop, the managers express their criteria on the proposal made by
the researcher in relation to the identified and systematized variables obtained from the
diagnosis. These analyses allow the researcher, based on the results obtained, to
determine the aspects that support the methodology, as well as its representation.

The strategic analysis as part of the methodology proposes action plans, aimed at the
transformation of the managers, therefore, the following are its essence.

4. Discussion of the implementation methodology

The researcher, based on the analysis of the results obtained in the workshops developed, identifies as necessary components for the methodology: the variables of the environment, the organizational and educational dimensions that had resulted as aspects proposed in the previous workshops, as well as some characteristics for its definition and the methodological assumptions that condition it. An assessment is made of the characteristics, classification, training activities, management systems and mechanisms that can be considered in the development of essential management skills and a proposal is made for four main stages for implementation, which is discussed, adjusted and validated in a third workshop.

5. Analysis of the proposed methodology

A fourth and last workshop was held, where the final proposal was presented and then validated with the group of experts through various techniques. 100% of the participants issued criteria on the relevance of the methodology, which were taken into consideration in the final proposal.

6. Diagnostic regularities

From the previous analyses, the general regularities of the diagnosis in the managers of the University of Havana are derived as shown in table 1, with the main achievements and limitations, which may favor or limit the implementation of the proposal.

Table 1 - Elements favoring and limiting the implementation of the methodology

Favoring	Limiting
High average age profile, boasts: more experience and knowledge	Profile with high average age, presumes: requires an important planning policy for future human resources needs.
More than 95.5% of respondents show general knowledge of what management skills are.	Habits acquired during years of management and which are difficult to uproot (95.6%).

They identify with management (average 4.18).	The time spent on formal activities generates a lack of this resource (time), conditioned by the individual development plans drawn up (88.2%)
It has a faculty of doctors and masters who promote research and quality training.	Insufficient financial resources (80.4%).
Competitiveness and recognition in research disciplines at the national level.	Managers do not play the role of main trainer and coach of managers.
Availability of the management of cadres	Teamwork is not encouraged
Existence of international calls for proposals and scholarships	Plans for development are not updated
Innovative and attractive projects at national and international level.	The introduction of own ideas through initiative is not facilitated.
Motivated personnel identified with their work.	Need for actions for the motivation of subordinates
	Problems with the budget necessary for conducting research
	Little feedback on the performance of essential management skills
	Poor university linkage with the productive sector, which limits essential management skills to adapt to current development trends.

Source: Elaborated by the authors

Once the entire work procedure has been explained, the **Methodology for the development of essential management skills** is obtained.

The methodology is aimed at transforming the process of developing essential management skills in managers as part of the diagnosis carried out with managers on

the current situation, determining the following regularities: The process does not offer a specific program for the development of essential management skills with a leadership approach, it takes into account its context and its peculiarities. Secondly, empiricism was observed in the way its managers act, since many of them work from experience and not with specialized training.

From the analysis of the relationship between the above elements, the methodological components and assumptions are determined in terms of implementation. To this end, the following components are established: environmental variables, organizational dimension and educational dimension.

Component: Context variables

Definition: determined by the influence on the methodology of the contents to be developed according to the needs for the development of managers, considering the context where they use the essential management skills and their organizational forms.

Methodological assumptions:

- Study of the problems and characteristics of the University of Havana as an institution to which managers belong
- Diagnosis of the needs in terms of the development of essential management skills in managers
- Classification of the development needs by thematic
- Selection of the fundamental themes around the variables

Component: Organizational dimension

Definition: determined by the pyramid of essential management skills and the human resources involved in the levels of the pyramid.

Methodological assumptions:

- Appropriate selection of teaching staff in accordance with their academic and teaching background and experience in the application of the contents to be taught

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- Organization of the teaching agenda in relation to the times and demands of the proposed activities, as well as adaptation to the contingencies of participation of the directors
- Relevant adoption of the teaching staff in accordance with their training in management techniques and experience in the IES, projecting it according to the real needs

Component: Educative dimension

Definition: determined by the continuous development of essential management skills and leadership in the context of HEI.

Methodological assumptions:

- Proposal of courses and on-the-job training with holistic, dynamic and flexible programs, adequate to the needs of managers and in function of social transformation
- Promotion of the development of personal, interpersonal and group management skills, according to the university reality and for the construction of knowledge
- Acquisition of knowledge in terms of economic and risk management
- Assessment of the development of skills through different training activities, depending on the scope determined by the leadership, its depth and impact from the fulfillment of the objectives

Figure 1 shows the fundamental relationships established between methodological assumptions.

Therefore, based on the above components and budgets, the following four stages of the proposed methodology are established, in order to achieve the expected results in the training of managers linked to tourism, travel and hospitality activities as shown in figure 2.

Fig. 1 - Representation of relationships among methodological assumptions

Source: Elaborated by the authors

Stage 1: Characterization and leveling of essential management skills: personal, interpersonal and group

In order to establish the current state of the essential management skills, contextualizing the development process according to the different types of managers and their status.

The development of managers presents a socio-technical orientation where they also involve clients, technical and administrative personnel with creative entrepreneurship and the learning of essential management skills that favor the strengthening of the institution through personal and group realization, in their interaction with social interests and the development of projects. The training process is not only a space for the development of managers, but of the whole society.

This research assumes this formative process with orientation from the technique of its management and towards society, in continuous dynamism and evolution, which is demonstrated in the practice of managers and administrative technical personnel of hotel facilities. Therefore, it constitutes an element to be considered in the development of essential management skills and, therefore, the integral training of managers by knowledge groups, through the overlap with the perceived leadership.
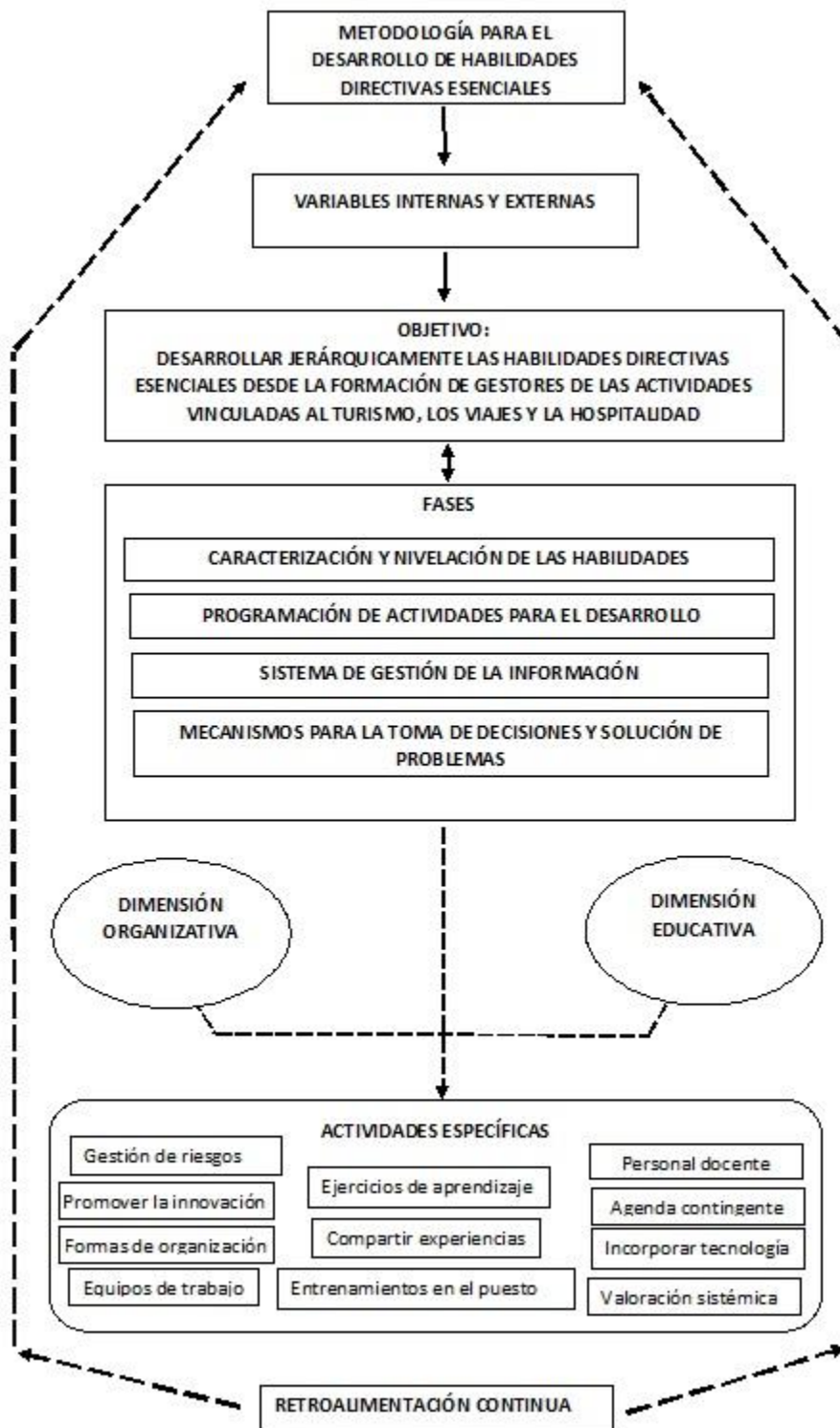
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Fig. 2 - Representation of the proposed methodology

Source: Elaborated by the authors

At this stage, it is important for managers to know themselves, their shortcomings, potentialities and projections, as well as the image they project, which is perceived by clients and has repercussions on the tourist facility and the services they provide.

Stage 2: Programming of activities for the development of management skills, essential within the training system

Training courses-workshops are proposed for managers, starting with top management, down to the managers closest to the base.

- Deliver face-to-face training courses for the development of management skills
- Coordinate with specialists the characteristics of the program to be developed, according to the needs and interests of managers
- Conduct thematic workshops on essential management skills and knowledge among managers
- Diversify the preparation of managers according to their real and strategic needs and interests, both personal and institutional
- Create a space for the exchange of experiences among managers
- Establish the main needs and, based on these, plan courses that could be associated with management techniques, emotional intelligence for managers, service management with a focus on clients, management skills from different approaches to leadership, contextualized to each institution, among others

These courses-workshops are based on the needs demonstrated in each institution by its managers, the suggestions of customers, suppliers, the shortcomings felt, the potential of competitors and the projections of each manager in the facility, as well as the projections for its positioning, continuous improvement and customer satisfaction in the improvement of services.

Stage 3: Design of an information management system on essential management skills for development

For its design and implementation, it is valid to start from:

- Deliver lectures on the history of essential management skills as a management technique and its importance
- Coordinate meetings between the entity's managers and specialists in essential management skills
- Insert a section on essential management skills on the facility's website
- Link the preparation of the cadres to the real needs of the facilities, with emphasis on performance, customer criteria, improvement plans, in this sense
- Disseminate the activities to be carried out and establish continuous feedback
- Among many others that could be carried out and reconstructed, according to the real needs

The management information system can be a viable tool for monitoring the performance of managers and how it influences customer service and attention and, therefore, the positioning of the facility in the market.

Stage 4: Establishment of efficient mechanisms to develop skills that support the decision-making and problem-solving process

The development of management skills does not take place in a single moment; it is an unfinished process of continuous improvement and updating; therefore, mechanisms must be established to allow it and thus respond to the demands of the environment, to the requirements demanded by clients and by senior management.

Among others, the following could be considered:

- Use computer programs to exercise knowledge of analysis and problem solving
- Conduct courses that promote creativity in the development of innovation management
- Work together with the technical administrative staff for continuous feedback and improvement of the mechanisms

- Take into account the needs of clients
- Use social networks, informal sources, spaces created in the facilities and the own experience of managers and technical-administrative personnel

The implementation of the methodology also requires the development of essential management skills and not disengaging from the environment.

The specific activities described guarantee the practical materialization of the methodology. They concretize its future implementation in the managers of activities related to tourism, travel and hospitality. During the execution of the methodology, a continuous and documented feedback must be maintained, in relation to the results obtained from the level of development of the essential management skills. This feedback should be done systematically to eliminate possible divergences between the conception of the methodology and the results achieved through its execution.

The study of the evolution of the term essential management skills demonstrates its importance for the current development of managers involved in the training of managers of activities related to the development of tourism, travel and hospitality, and as a basis for the design of a methodology. This justifies the continuous improvement of the training process of essential management skills that must be ensured with the training, based on the methodology.

- The diagnosis carried out in the managers who guarantee the training of tourism managers facilitated the determination of the regularities, as well as the proposal of the methodological components and budgets that were reached through the execution of the procedure elaborated for the design and validation of the methodology, through the criteria of the managers
- The proposed methodology could be adjusted to other contexts, prior adjustment to their conditions, which makes it feasible and generalizable

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Authors' contribution:

Jimmy Eduardo Ascón Villa: originated the idea, contextualized the study and processed information.

Máryuri García González: processed information, contributed to the writing and updating of the bibliography.

Both authors reviewed the writing of the manuscript and approved the final version.

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