





Historical overview to the management development process in Cuba

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Abstract

The world as a whole currently demands that all workplaces be led by their main resource: competent managers. One key factor that improves their comprehensive managerial knowledge and determines more effective executive roles is the training and development process. Due to its importance, this article aims at presenting a compilation of the main historical moments of the managerial training process in Cuba from the perspective of various authors and systematized by the researchers of this work. A qualitative methodology is employed, based on the review of documentary sources, from which the possibility of recognizing the evolution that has distinguished this process in the national context from a pedagogical point of view is derived. The results obtained show arguments that allow to assume the identification of success and failure factors to be transformed and developed as a process for which strategic actions can be traced to contribute to their improvement.

Keywords: development; managers; process; training.

Mirada histórica al proceso de la preparación los directivos en Cuba

Resumen

El mundo en general exige, en la actualidad, directivos competentes en cada entidad laboral, que constituyan el principal recurso de las organizaciones, es la preparación de los mismos, una de las vías fundamentales para propiciar la integralidad de estos y su desarrollo en la actividad de dirección. Por la importancia que reviste este artículo tiene como objetivo: presentar una compilación de los principales momentos históricos del proceso de preparación de los directivos en Cuba, desde la perspectiva de autores y sistematizados por las investigadoras. Se emplea una metodología cualitativa, basada en la revisión de fuentes documentales, de lo que se deriva la posibilidad de reconocer el devenir que ha distinguido este proceso en el contexto nacional desde una mirada pedagógica. Los resultados obtenidos muestran argumentos que permiten asumir la identificación de los aciertos y desaciertos para su transformación y desarrollo como todo proceso de lo que se pueden trazar acciones estratégicas para contribuir a su perfeccionamiento.

Palabras clave: desarrollo; dirección; proceso, preparación.

Introduction

The economic, political and social changes that have occurred in Cuba since the improvement of the economic model confirm once again the need for knowledge, skills and abilities of managers, based on the epistemological foundations of the sciences of education and especially Pedagogy for the conduction of management processes and

the sustained attention to their preparation. In Cuba, the very demands of the revolutionary work have required that this important actor of the management activity has an integral culture and an adequate knowledge of management sciences; an aspect prioritized by the highest command of the Revolution since its beginnings [1].

The preparation of managers has had a very particular development in our society, with its own characteristics and

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scenarios, which are interesting to analyze and although we are not in favor of periodizations or chronologies, since any of them can be susceptible to errors and omissions that can raise controversies and polemics, in our studies on these topics as a tool for a better understanding, we use an organization of the main moments that are related or that constitute points of reference in the preparation of State and Government cadres in our country, from the triumph of the Revolution to date.

In no way do they pretend to constitute a truth accepted by all; on the contrary, we will consider one of the purposes fulfilled if the elements we point out here motivate the discussion and inspire a more detailed analysis of the different stages, facts, actions, which have been building the system of training of cadres that we can exhibit today in Cuba.

We have taken some reference elements from different publications and studies carried out by specialists and professors who have previously addressed the subject, as well as from reports and articles consulted. But we have preferred to form our own periodization, which is more in line with the purposes of our research, in which the delimitation of each stage is closely related to the pedagogical content and the main moments that, in our opinion, characterize each one of them up to the present day.

2. Methodology

2.1 Procedure for the studies

The paradigm used for the development of the research was qualitative. It allowed the exploration and search for information through the use of a system of methods. Theoretical methods such as: historical-logical, inductive-deductive, analytical-synthetic, were applied to carry out the bibliographical review and to conform the conceptual framework about the knowledge on the origin and tendencies of the preparation of cadres in Cuba from 1959 to date.

The historical moments of the managerial training process in Cuba were defined as search criteria. The results of the bibliographic review were focused on articles, master's and doctoral theses found in sites such as: Google Scholar, Scielo, Redalyc and in Cuban magazines directed to the topic of managerial training and reserves in Cuba specifically under investigation, among which are Pedagogy and Society, Conrado, Managerial Brochures and Cuban Magazine of Public and Business Administration (Table 1).

A chronological analysis is made by stages with the advances and achievements reached in each one of them in the preparation of managers and their reserves and the legal basis that was approved for this activity by the highest leadership of the country, recognizing from these instances

Table 1.

Documents consulted on the subject

Documents consulted		
Articles	28	
Master's theses	5	
Doctoral theses	10	

Source: Own elaboration.

the need to give high priority to generate capacities to be able to manage the companies and organizations of the whole country within the Cuban business sector and the public administration.

3. Discussion of results

3.1 Historical evolution of the training process for managers in Cuba

Many authors Santiesteban Llerena, Pinto Hernandez & Gomez Parets, Vazquez Perez, Consuegra Hernandez, Lopez Martinez and Perez et al. [2-7], state that the historical evolution of the managers' training and development process in Cuba began in an official and institutionalized manner only in 1959, after the Triumph of the Revolution.

Studies on the training of this important human resource are of strategic value in a scenario characterized by a knowledge society. Numerous researches and experiences support this statement. Among them are fundamental those carried out at the Universities of Havana (2000), Enrique Jose Varona (2001), Marta Abreu de las Villas (2007), University of Medical Sciences of Santiago de Cuba (2015).

Every historical study considers among its first steps the spatial and temporal precision of the object to be investigated. An object that, due to its procedural nature, must be studied in its development, that is, in its different phases, stages or periods of transformation; this historical evolution has its expression in periodization [8, p.18].

According to Guadarrama Gonzalez, periodization should not be an arbitrary and superficial division, but rather, based on the approach to the essential causes of the development of the object of study, the periodization should reflect the most important moments of its evolution and its guiding trend [9, p.142].

The process aimed at the preparation of management cadres has been a priority task in the projection and execution of Cuba's policy after the triumph of the Revolution. It is necessary to point out that this process has gone through different stages which in turn reflect the dynamics of the revolutionary process itself.

3.2 Stages of the training evolution of Cuban managers from a pedagogical point of view

The systematization of the subject carried out by the authors leads to the historical analysis of this process carried out by several authors such as [3] Pinto Hernández & Gómez Parets, Guevara de la Serna, Dorticos Torrado, Carnota Lauzan, García Colina, Codina Jimenez, Columbié Santana, Montenegro Moran, Gonzalez Martin, & Gorguet Pi and Llumbet Estanque [3,10-18], who have characterized the different stages or periods and allow us to observe that it has evolved according to the changes in the economic, political and social environment of the country.

The cited authors offer a systematization the main axis of which is to make known the facts and events that explain the development and evolution of the managers' training in Cuba from 1959 to 2015 according to the demands of each historical moment. This does not mean a narrow and

immovable mold; on the contrary, it carries an implicit analysis and reflection of its authors. However, this background allows the author to deepen and study the process of training of managers and to resize its evolution up to 2021 from the understanding of its pedagogical character adjusted to the purposes of this research.

The study distinguishes four major stages that integrate elements studied by the authors mentioned above and complements their analysis with elements that demonstrate the pedagogical character that characterizes it and gradually enriches and dimensions it, assuming as criteria: the main features from the standpoint of working with managers at each stage and some of its components such as: learning content, the main organizational forms that prevailed, in addition to planning, also offering some dates and main facts (Table 2).

Main features from the point of view of working with management cadres

In these years, the total dismantling of the existing state and business apparatus took place and the preparation of managers was directly derived from the conditions in which the massive exodus of professionals took place, making it necessary to undertake the selection, training and accelerated appointment of thousands of management cadres for all sectors; managers who often lacked managerial experience and even basic technical preparation, counting as fundamental characteristics to succeed, with the decision to assume any task and loyalty to the homeland and the Revolution. At this stage, the preparation of the leaders developed in an emergent and accelerated way, taking into consideration the conditions in which the appointing of the managers took place.

Contents were defined in order to know the essence of the management activity, taking into consideration the cultural level of the cadres and the needs of the country. These included: tasks of an administrator, principles of work organization, criteria and techniques for the analysis of costs and productivity, quality control, questions on the economic planning process, general technical-productive elements, principles of work organization, quality control, among others

Soviet manuals were used as basic bibliography, which in the end frustrated the need to prepare managers to face reallife problems.

Table 2. Evolution stages in the training of Cuban managers.

Stages	Years	Identification
First Stage	1959 - 1971	Beginning of management training in Cuba
Second Stage	1972 - 1989	Improvement and implementation of managerial training experiences in Cuba
Third Stage	1990 - 2000	Improving management training in Cuba
Fourth Stage	2001 - 2021	Strengthening and consolidating management training in Cuba
First Stage	between 1959 and 1971	Beginning of management training in Cuba.

Source: own elaboration.

In 1986, there appears an analysis made by Ernesto Guevara in the political, legal and consultation documents on politics and training of cadres about: Low importance that was given to the contents of administrative techniques in the whole course and pointed out that the study of these techniques should lead to a better use of resources, decision making based on data analysis, as well as the ability to integrate all the factors involved in a production process [10, p.18].

Organizational structure

The managers' training was mainly provided through short courses as the predominant organizational structure, which was conditioned by the low general level of schooling of those who attended and by the responsibilities they had to fulfill in Cuban companies and industries.

In 1961 such training began to be institutionalized with the creation of the Patricio Lumumba School of Administrators, which was the first institution created in Cuba for the training of its revolutionary managers and focused on the search for its own path in the field of administration, the systematic study for the improvement of management theories and methods in the conditions of socialism [14, p.19].

Planning

The actions conceived were planned in the short term, with the aim of improving the cultural and educational level of managers. The courses were planned on the basis of the more general deficiencies that the managers had to face the management activity. Between 1963 and 1964, the first Soviet collaborators arrived to provide advice to Cuban teachers in this area and to transmit all their experience to them.

Molina, referring to the preparation of managers at this stage, stated: "(...) that in these years the development of the preparation process of managers was characterized by being spontaneous, it was not systematic, it lacked comprehensiveness" [19, p.18].

Second Stage (between 1972 and 1989): Improvement and implementation of experiences in the training of managers in Cuba.

Main features from the point of view of working with management cadres.

At this stage, priority was given to industrial development. In 1973, the Fulgencio Oroz National School of Managers was created, located in Ciudad Escolar Libertad. This institution contributed to broaden the perspectives for the training of managers in the education sector, establishing in its curricula the study of management science and expanding knowledge in the fields of pedagogy, psychology, Marxism-Leninism, among others.

In 1975, at the First congress of the Communist Party of Cuba, a new System of Economic Management and Planning was approved, with the purpose of training business managers to master the mechanisms and processes of this new system. In 1976, the National School of Economic Management was created, which in later years became the Higher Institute, offering a Bachelor's Degree in Economic Management, which only active managers received, that is,

those who held management positions [14, p.20].

In July 1976, the Ministry of Higher Education was created and by the mid-1980s the network of Higher Education Centers in the country was established.

Business management in Cuba in the mid-1980s presented a very different panorama from that of the first years of the revolutionary triumph, as a result of the efforts made by the Revolution in the development of education and the country's economy. The relations and collaboration received in this respect with the Soviet Union and the socialist field were consolidated.

As the Cuban Revolution was consolidated, managers were assigned a range of responsibilities, and during this period effort aimed at strengthening the general education of the leaders began.

Training was based primarily on the experience acquired in the management of industry and above all on the readiness of the people to lead. It was intended to raise the theoretical and pedagogical level of managers in their management activity, to form habits of systematic study, to link the theory taught in the classroom with the practice of socialist construction; however, it was not accompanied by a training strategy.

Learning contents

The contents at this stage were more closely connected to the development of the industry and business management in Cuba. At this stage, a search for updated bibliography began through exchanges with foreign specialists of high level and international experience, mainly from Bulgaria, USA, some from Canada, Spain and Mexico.

Through a process of critical analysis and suitability to the specific conditions of Cuba, its culture and values, the contents were defined in order to obtain maximum benefit from them and to reinforce with their use, the principles of our socialist society.

In 1988, computer techniques were introduced as part of the contents of management training programs, and in later years' others were included related to the improvement of management skills in the organization of personal work and interpersonal relations, time management, effective delegation, work planning and organization, leadership and motivation, and management by objectives.

Organizational structure

In 1985, a team of selected professors from the University of Havana and Higher Polytechnic Institute José Antonio Echevarria was created and different types of courses were designed and taught on an experimental basis, and new organizational forms were incorporated, such as workshops and management consulting to selected groups of cadres.

In 1987 another organizational model was introduced in Cuba: consulting by a group of North American specialists who worked with groups of professors from the UH and the José Antonio Echevarria Higher Polytechnic Institute, with the participation of Cuban managers.

With the knowledge and the implementation of experiences accumulated up to that moment, in 1988 the first Centers for the Study of Management Techniques were created at the University of Havana and the José Antonio

Echevarria Higher Polytechnic Institute.

These groups of professors from these centers designed and delivered new training programs for managers of companies and public entities. The organizational modalities that predominated in the programs were: courses, workshops and seminars, developed on a full-time basis and taught in special facilities assigned to Center for the Study of Management Techniques, at the University of Havana, with a duration of 20-40 hours.

Given the importance acquired by management training for the business sectors and companies, they began to request programs to be developed by the company and began to use another organizational approach, which was the training of management teams, focusing for the first time on determining the learning needs of the managers where the program was to be implemented.

Planning

The scientific and technical update and the assimilation of the most advanced approaches and techniques based on the experiences of specialists from other countries in the planning and organization of training resulted in the development of a better balance between the teaching and management activities carried out by the managers and a more integrated and systemic conception of the process.

The process was characterized by continuous improvement, the Branch Schools emerged and the process began to be planned more closely linked to institutions such as the Universities and the Higher Pedagogical Institutes, which played and still play an important role in this task, making it possible to improve the didactic and methodological aspects, using teaching methods for the directors that promoted the exchange of experience among them during the training.

Third Stage (between 1990 and 2000): Improvement of management training in Cuba.

Main features from the point of view of working with management cadres.

The first years of this stage began with the collapse of the economy as a result of the disappearance of the socialist field and the breakdown of the USSR; the economic crisis known as "special period" worsened.

Cuban managers had to start working in very different conditions, in which supplies, customers and financial resources were no longer guaranteed by a plan, but had to be secured through efficient management of markets, customers and the financial resources of the companies they managed [14, p.12].

Therefore, the work developed and the experiences gathered so far in the preparation of managers had to be improved and redesigned according to the new historical and social conditions that existed, the "Battle of Ideas", unity reinforcement, consolidation of the economic transformations and struggle for the sustainable development of the country from a socialist model.

Learning contents

From 1991 to 1995, work with components containing the essential general contents defined in the National Strategy for the Training and Development of State and Government

Cadres and their Reserves began, and they are grouped as follows:

- Ideological and Political Training.
- National, Territorial, and Civil Defense Training.
- Training in Administration and Management.
- Technical and Professional Training.

New contents, based on the general ones mentioned above, were introduced in management training linked to the relationships of companies with their environment such as: marketing, others aimed at change management, work with human resources, negotiation, conflict management, in order to increase the competitiveness of Cuban companies and industries. Other contents were also introduced, such as "(...) the study of the policy drawn up during these years, for which programs are designed to introduce the approved materials and those related to the process of rectifying errors" [20, p.8].

Organizational structure

The new historical and social conditions of the country generated the demand of specific companies' programs for training their managers, and there was a prevalence of management team training and short courses in which the learning needs of managers in correspondence with the companies' interests were determined in advance.

As time goes by, improvement actions are carried out and other organizational ways are included; for example, in some universities, Master's programs in Management are taught for managers, events are held in which experiences in the activity of management are shared and some managers enroll in the different PhD training programs.

Planning

During the first years, between 1990 and 1993, planning was based on the demands made by the companies. In view of the urgency of the transformations, programs with specific characteristics were developed according to the learning needs of the managers.

This process planning began to be improved in 1996 with the elaboration of annual objectives through a national system for the preparation of managers, starting with the approval and execution of the first National Strategy for the Preparation and Improvement of Managers and the elaboration of territorial strategies for the preparation of managers in the Central State Administration Agencies and in the Provincial Administration Councils.

At this stage, the country begins to demand the impact measurement of the managers' training in each Board of Directors.

Fourth Stage (between 2001 and 2021): Strengthening and consolidating management training in Cuba.

Main features from the point of view of working with management cadres.

In its early years, the stage was characterized by continuing to prioritize the political and ideological training and the development of the "Battle of Ideas", as well as the beginning of the Expansion of Higher Education all over the country, playing an important role the Municipal University Centers who led the management training process in the country.

The second and third versions of the National Strategy for the Preparation and Improvement of State and Government Executives and their Reserves were approved in 2010 and 2021, and the same components of the general contents continue to be worked on in accordance with the economic, political and social changes.

The process of preparing managers is intensified once again, institutionalization is strengthened and the Higher School of State and Government Cadres is created on October 18, 2011, where the Diplomas in Public Administration and Business Management and Direction are given both at the national level and in the territories for managers at the intermediate management level. A methodology for the performance evaluation of managers is presented at the national level, with indicators and dimensions that allow the assessment of their performance in the company and, in addition, training actions are designed based on their results and new learning needs.

In these years the country worked on the Conceptualization of the Cuban Economic and Social Model of Socialist Development, which addressed the main transformations to build a sovereign, independent, socialist, democratic, prosperous and sustainable nation and the primordial role of social property over the fundamental means of production, the interrelation with different forms of management and the improvement of the Socialist State and its management systems, which constitute the main basis for updating the strategy for the preparation of managers in force since 2010.

Between 2018 and 2021, it is important to highlight that work is again being done to achieve management training improvement, a reason that constitutes one of the most important challenges at present, as it is addressed as a necessity by the Cuban president when he says "what is not well known cannot be accomplished. Managers must read and study" [21, p.9].

The Administration of State and Government Cadres intensifies the training in these years and highlights its importance in 2018 when Decree Law 350 is approved regarding the improvement of the "Branch Schools" and Training Centers to respond to the demands of the Cuban economic model and the continuous improvement of the performance of managers [22].

In 2019, when the new Constitution was approved in Cuba, the organization, structure and functioning of the Municipal Administrations was determined and a new figure emerged, designated as a cadre: "the intendant who performs administrative executive functions and directs the Municipal Administration." [23, p.56].

In 2020, the Administration of State and Government Cadres in each province is oriented to perfect the process of management training based on the territorial context, for which the Provincial and Municipal Groups for Management Training were created, which have the mission of assisting the Provincial Government of People's Power in the implementation of policies for the preparation of managers to ensure the economic and social development of the province [24,25].

An important feature at this stage in training managers is the approval and publication in the Official Gazette of the Republic of March 19, 2021 of Decree-Law 13/2020 "Working System with State and Government Cadres and their Reserves". The purpose of this decree is to establish the basic rules for the application and control of the System of Work with the Cadres and their Reserves, and also, the Presidential Decree 208/2021 "Regulation of the System of Work with the Cadres of the State and the Government and their Reserves" is intended to establish the organizational elements, rules and procedures for the best application and control of the System of Work with the Cadres and their Reserves [26,27].

In the 8th Congress of the Party, the policy of managers was analyzed and the need to conceive the strategic approach of the actions of their preparation was ratified. In these years, it was indicated to pay attention and demand attention to the process and to work with the Strategy and the implementation of the Training Systems, making the Provincial Governments of the People's Power and the Administration Councils responsible for this important and necessary task [21].

Learning contents

This stage is marked by the emergence of new forms of ownership associated with foreign capital. In this aspect, it is necessary to provide managers with scientific tools through the contents they receive, so that they can successfully carry out the new tasks that are imposed.

The contents already in these years comprise a system of knowledge, skills and labor competencies necessary for the development of each company, so they must be closely interrelated to achieve comprehensiveness.

In 2019, we begin to strategically design training programs for mayors and their main contents focused on Public Administration, Municipal Government Management, Process Management, Work Systems, Strategic Planning, Local Productive System, Design of Municipal Development Strategies, Policies for Territorial Development, Financial Management for Local Development and its incentives, Management of Local Development Projects, Value Chains, Governmental Accounting and Budgeting in function of Territorial Development, Design of Social Communication Strategies, Electronic Government, Improvement of Local Bodies of People's Power, Science, Technology and Innovation Policies for Territorial Development, Integral Policy for the Improvement of the Informatization of Society, Cybersecurity, Legal Norms of the Government Information System [28].

In 2021, the third version of the National Strategy for the Training and Development of State and Government Cadres and their Reserves was approved, which combines theoretical and practical preparation in the contents taught and articulates with the components of the general content of management training [27].

At the closing of the 8th Congress of the Party Diaz-Canel stated: "(...) collective leadership, theoretical studies are contents that cannot be postponed, together with the necessary theoretical and administrative training, with modern leadership techniques and a broad cultural and historical base" [21, p.12].

In the year 2021 one of the purposes is to provide managers with knowledge that contributes to the management of the economic and social model of socialist development, with a conscious and ethical performance; for this purpose, in the Eighth Party Congress Diaz-Canel proposes some objectives to be developed through learning content as follows [21]:

- To develop sensitivity and bonding with the people.
- To mobilize labor collectives in the solution of problems.
- To develop management skills.
- To ensure that the cadres are characterized by their political soundness.
- To guarantee municipal autonomy
- To raise the cadres' convictions, reinforcing their unconditionality and commitment to fulfill tasks.
- Develop the skills to argue, dialogue and use collective leadership to solve problems. Develop the skills to argue, dialogue and use collective leadership to solve problems.

Organizational structure

In the last years of this stage, intense work is done for training improvement. The Administration of State and Government Cadres indicated that the organizational forms are projected gradually in correspondence with the managers' level of management and taking into account their learning needs (diagnosis), to respond to the functions of the positions. Other organizational forms are introduced, such as rotation, substitution, preparation of management teams, self-preparation, which allow the management to have a better vision of the company's operation.

Planning

During the first years of this stage, process planning continues with designed actions based on the indications of the National Strategy for the Training and Improvement of State and Government Cadres.

However, in the final years (2019-2021) in the Provincial Governments and Municipal Administrations of each province, the Provincial and Municipal Groups for Management Training were created, which are responsible for the planning, training organization and control of the preparation of the managers in each province.

With the approval of the second and third version of the National Strategy for the Training and Development of State and Government Cadres and its reserves, this constitutes the guiding basis to materialize the organization of the preparation of managers at the country level. Through the analysis carried out in the 8th Congress of the Party, it is ratified the need to conceive the strategic approach of the actions for management training taking into consideration the management level and the learning needs of the managers in the province.

Diaz-Canel in his PhD thesis proposes transformations in recent years in management training, among which the strengthening of the institutional framework through the approval and implementation of 12 policies and legal norms that strengthen this process stand out [28]. These are:

- Decree-Law 350-2017 on the Training of Workers [22].
- Decree-Law 372-2019 on the National System of Scientific Degrees [29].
- Agreement 8625-2019 of the Council of Ministers. It establishes the concept of training for special state interest, as well as the components that integrate the

- continuous training model of Cuban Higher Education [30].
- Resolution 138-2019 of the Minister of Higher Education. It establishes the component specificities of the continuing education model of Cuban higher education [31].
- Resolution 139-2019 of the Minister of Higher Education on the organization and operation of the National System of Scientific Degrees [32].
- Resolution 140-2019 of the Minister of Higher Education. Regulation of Graduate Education of the Republic of Cuba [33].

4. Conclusions

A review has been made of the main stages in the training of Cuban managers up to the present day as an expression of the need to have knowledge of the past of a present phenomenon, which is of vital importance to be studied by the management of labor entities, in order to use it as a tool for the improvement and professional and personal growth of professionals who are the main resource of organizations and with whom they can achieve their goals.

In this study, the trends in the management training in Cuba show an evolution marked by the changes in the economic, political and social environment and in accordance with the crucial events for the life within the country; the strengthening of training as a process of systematic training and gradual improvement towards a didactic structuring of more integrality and interrelation between contents, organizational forms and training management, which shows a conception of an essentially pedagogical and educational process in the process of continuous improvement.

4.1 Future work

The subject can still be systematized in depth in the main historial moments of the preparation process of managers from a pedagogical context with emphasis on the use of methods and orgazational forms that have led to a growth in quality and effectiveness in the results of the management activity in Cuba.

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