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Original article

The upgrading of Physical Culture professionals, from the university extension

La superación de los profesionales de la Cultura Física, desde la extensión universitaria

O aprimoramento dos profissionais de cultura física por meio do trabalho de extensão universitária

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ABSTRACT

The improvement of the three substantive processes of the university, teaching, research and university extension has been a priority for Cuban higher education that has developed a series of changes and transformations in order to guarantee an excellent training of the professionals who graduate from it. In this sense, the research addressed the issue of university extension in professional upgrading and had the objective of promoting the improvement of university teachers and their link with scientific advances in a postgraduate course for the Degree in Physical Culture and Sports, from the university extension. The research process was governed by the dialectical-materialist method; theoretical level methods such as historical-logical and analysis-synthesis and empirical level ones as documentary analysis, in-depth interview and survey were used to interpret the results obtained in each stage of the research. The results showed as main weaknesses the insufficient recognition of the importance of university extension in the teaching context, as well as the little scientific production related to the subject. From the study carried out, it is concluded that the university extension in the improvement of this professional constitutes an expeditious way for a better knowledge, management, preservation and dissemination of intra- and extracurricular activities and in the improvement of the quality of life, in order to contribute to form citizens capable of being, knowing, doing and living together.

Keywords: Physical Culture, university extension, professional upgrading.

RESUMEN

El perfeccionamiento de los tres procesos sustantivos de la universidad, la docencia, la investigación y la extensión universitaria ha sido una prioridad para la educación superior cubana que ha desarrollado una serie de cambios y transformaciones en aras de garantizar una excelente formación de los profesionales que egresan de ella. En este sentido, la investigación abordó el tema de la extensión universitaria en la superación profesional y tuvo como objetivo favorecer la superación de los docentes universitarios y su vinculación con los avances científicos en un curso de posgrado para la Licenciatura en Cultura Física y Deportes, desde la extensión universitaria. El proceso investigativo se rigió por el método



dialectico-materialista y se emplearon métodos del nivel teórico como el histórico-lógico y el análisis-síntesis y del nivel empírico el análisis documental, la entrevista en profundidad y la encuesta, para interpretar los resultados obtenidos en cada etapa de la investigación. Los resultados mostraron como principales debilidades el insuficiente reconocimiento de la importancia de la extensión universitaria en el contexto docente, así como la poca producción científica relacionada con la temática. Del estudio realizado se concluye que la extensión universitaria en la superación de este profesional constituye una vía expedita para un mejor conocimiento, gestión, preservación y difusión de actividades intra- y extracurriculares y en la mejora de la calidad de vida, con el fin de contribuir a formar ciudadanos capaces de ser, conocer, hacer y convivir juntos.

Palabras clave: Cultura Física, extensión universitaria, superación profesional.

RESUMO

A melhoria dos três processos substantivos da universidade, o ensino, a pesquisa e a extensão universitária, tem sido uma prioridade para o ensino superior cubano, que tem desenvolvido uma série de mudanças e transformações a fim de garantir uma excelente formação dos profissionais que nela se graduam. Nesse sentido, a pesquisa abordou a questão da extensão universitária no desenvolvimento profissional e seu objetivo foi promover o desenvolvimento dos professores universitários e sua vinculação com os avanços científicos em um curso de pós-graduação para o Bacharelado em Cultura Física e Esportes, a partir da perspectiva da extensão universitária. O processo de pesquisa foi regido pelo método dialético-materialista, utilizando métodos teóricos como o histórico-lógico e a análise-síntese e métodos empíricos como a análise documental, a entrevista em profundidade e o survey, para interpretar os resultados obtidos em cada etapa da pesquisa. Os resultados apontaram como principais fragilidades o insuficiente reconhecimento da importância da extensão universitária no contexto do ensino, bem como a pouca produção científica relacionada ao tema. A partir do estudo realizado, conclui-se que a extensão universitária no aprimoramento desse profissional constitui um caminho expedito para um melhor conhecimento, gerenciamento, preservação e divulgação das atividades intra e



extracurriculares e na melhoria da qualidade de vida, com o objetivo de contribuir para formar cidadãos capazes de ser, saber, fazer e conviver.

Palavras-chave: Cultura Física, extensão universitária, desenvolvimento profissional.

INTRODUCTION

Cuban higher education's primary purpose is to train generations of men and women who develop all their potential, with a broad culture that allows them to adequately face the challenges before them, from the implementation of actions that contribute to improving university processes of teaching, research and university extension. The upgrading of university teachers, specifically in the area of physical culture is not exempt from such problems, given the role he/she plays and performs in the educational context.

During the last decades, on the international and national scene, university extension has played a necessary role in the teaching of professionals and in the technical scientific improvement of society. In the context of Cuban higher education, the contributions provided by Rovira and López (2017), González and González-Fernández (2019), Pulido and Barreiro (2019) and Rojas *et al.* (2020) in order to strengthen knowledge related to this topic.

The social function of the Cuban university is to train citizens capable of promoting culture in any environment where they interact as actors of social transformation, with participation and identity and a final objective in the benefit of society, in the understanding and dialogue of knowledge; this necessarily implies an active position as transformation actors (Rovira and López, 2017).

In the sciences of physical culture, the studies carried out by García *et al.* (2017), Suárez *et al.* (2017) and Rodríguez *et al.* (2018) who address the issue of upgrading this professional, from the exercise of the profession, but do not address elements associated with the extension process.



It is coincided with the criteria of Escudero (1998), González (1997), Díaz (1997), Añorga (2014) and Durán (2015) when they refer to professional upgrading as a process of permanent training, of systematic updating of university graduates for their improvement and thus guarantee the best performance of these specialists in the activity of the branch in which they performe, as well as the enrichment of their cultural heritage.

The Degree in Physical Culture and Sports, given the plurality in the different spheres of action, demands the upgrading of a competent professional. Hence, the university extension constitutes a primary component that strengthens the rest of the processes. For this educational level, this professional should not be limited to scientific and didactic preparation; instead, they need to learn and project the efficient and effective management of university processes, hence the meaning of their training and improvement.

Specifically, in the career of Degree in Physical Culture and Sports, from the "Hermanos Saíz Montes de Oca" University of Pinar del Río, based on practice and teaching experience in topics related to the study of university extension, treated in undergraduate and postgraduate courses, international and national workshops, advisory services for the completion of undergraduate studies, as well as scientific debates at the Faculty and Career level, the existence of a scientific vacuum on the subject under study is verified. In addition, an initial exploratory study made it possible to detect strengths and weaknesses.

The main strengths were reflected in the existence of a Department of University Extension with experience in work in the Bachelor's degree in Physical Culture and Sports; the National University Extension Program of the mentioned university and the one of the referred career coexist as documents that govern this process; in addition, the Professional's Model guides the intention of training a professional with transformative and innovative capacity, where those involved recognize the need to improve the university extension in professional improvement.

The weaknesses detected were that the vision of teachers about the importance of the extension process in its integration into the teaching-learning process is still limited; in the insufficient use of the potential of university extension as a training process to promote the



professional upgrading, as well as lack of projection of the actions by teachers for the development of extension activities.

Likewise, university extension is not recognized as part of the integral training of teachers, so the work from the disciplines of the object of the profession is limited, as is the preparation of the teacher to participate in extension actions that are carried out spontaneously. To this is added that in the bank of problems of the Career the insufficiencies related to the upgrading of the professionals from the university extension are not considered and there are no postgraduate courses that deal with essential elements of this process.

In the context of higher education, this research highlights that it is necessary to train this professional in a comprehensive general culture that contributes to the fulfillment of his/her mission from the particularities of the spheres of action and the population towards which he/she directs his/her pedagogical activity; therefore, the objective was to promote the upgrading of university teachers and their connection with scientific advances in a postgraduate course for the Degree in Physical Culture and Sports, from the university extension.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research was developed from the combination of different methods. As a general method, the Dialectic-Materialist method was determined, which allowed the study of university extension as a process, the determination of the components and the main dialectical relationships, as well as their contradictions and the foundation and integration of the methods used.

The historical-logical method, to know the evolution of the studied process, its fundamental historical connections, general and essential laws of its operation and development and determination of trends.



The analysis-synthesis allowed the object to be broken down into its parts and qualities and to understand the essential elements that typify it, revealed the fundamental relationships, the general peculiarities existing in them and the main links to establish the antecedents and trends that determined the behavior of said process and the theoretical foundation of the investigation.

The use of the empirical method documentary analysis was valid for the review of all documents referring to university extension in the upgrading of this professional, in this sense, reference is made to the National University Extension Program, Professional Model and Study Plan E. The survey allowed to verify the perception of the teachers of the Bachelor of Physical Culture and Sports career on the university extension process and its current state.

Meanwhile, the in-depth interview provided necessary information for the diagnosis of the research, on the treatment that in the upgrading of the professional is granted to the university extension, the deepening of the subject and knowing criteria and evaluations in this regard. In addition, it allowed the design of the form of upgrading appropriate to the context that is studied.

The research population (Table 1) was made up of 40 teachers, from first to fourth year of different subjects belonging to the regular daytime course, as shown below:

Table 1. - Population used in this study

Esferas de actuación	Cantidad de docentes	Años de experiencia
Educación Física	8	10
Deporte	12	7
Recreación Física	12	12
Cultura Física Terapéutica y Profiláctica	8	20



RESULTS

The research was carried out in the period between 2020-2022 and the diagnosis made it possible to identify the weaknesses of the studied process. The historical-logical theoretical method allowed to determine the essential contexts of the studied object that are externalized in the problem and that can be solved in the research. The analysis-synthesis allowed to verify the need, the deficiencies in the process of upgrading of the teachers, from the university extension and consecutively the fulfillment of the objective.

The documentary analysis covered the documents referring to this professional and to the upgrading from the university extension, coincident points were examined and established; it was highlighted that there are no intentional projections regarding the topic being addressed.

The examination carried out on the Study Plan E of the Career showed that there are insufficiencies on the theme, despite the fact that in the own curriculum there are subjects conducive to working on topics related to university extension.

The authors insist on the need to strengthen content on university extension, assuming that the professional future of this specialty must pay attention to the needs, demands and possibilities of each context, depending on the different age groups` (Figure 1).



Análisis de la encuesta



Fig. 1. - Results of the test

The survey applied to the 40 teachers that made up the research population showed that only 37.5 % declared receiving, in their training, aspects related to university extension; while the rest, 62.5 %, describe not having received content in this regard.

Another derivation provided by the survey was that, of the 40 teachers surveyed, only 27.5 % mentioned the organizational forms of university extension and none its importance as a training process in the different spheres of action of this professional.

The results achieved showed the lack of knowledge about the main regulations for university extension at the international level and in Cuba; Of the 40 teachers, only 32.5% were able to refer to the National University Extension Program, while 55% did not show knowledge about it (Figure 2).





Fig. 2. - Results of the interview

The in-depth interview yielded little recognition of the hierarchy of the subject in the university environment, to which insufficiencies were added from the curricular point of view, therefore, the treatment of university extension through interdisciplinary relationships established with subjects and disciplines of the curriculum was considered right.

In addition, criteria were issued on the few existing spaces and events that contribute to the subject in question; they referred to the need to create a project or group dedicated to the study and research on university extension, and the creation of spaces to carry out activities related to the subject. All the interviewees recognized the importance of the subject in the upgrading of the physical culture professional (Figure 3).



Fig. 3 - Scheme of the Postgraduate Course



Consequently, a postgraduate course is proposed as a secondary form of professional upgrading. Its problem stems from the need that the teachers of the Bachelor of Physical Culture and Sport have for a greater knowledge of the university extension based on professional upgrading.

The training of professionals in the university context is an integrating and systematic process, in which the general and professional culture is preserved, enriched and developed. The diversity of positions shows the need to resignify university extension from the characteristics and relevance that participation in projects with the community acquires in the training processes of university students (Rafaghelli, 2017).

The postgraduate course has a total of 30 class hours, grants one credit, its modality is part-time, emphasizes the importance of professional upgrading from the university extension process and responds to the policy, as expressed in the document rector, not only of the guidelines, but from the very conception of the projections and the challenges of the extension process. They constitute the general system of knowledge (Table 2).

Table 2. - Thematic plan

Tema	Contenido	Horas formación teórica	Horas de trabajo del cursista
I	Procesos sustantivos. Definición del concepto de extensión universitaria. Polisemia y tendencias en su definición	4h	4h
II	Formas organizativas de la extensión universitaria y vías para su desarrollo en la carrera Cultura Física desde las diferentes esferas de actuación de este profesional	4h	2h
III	La Cultura Física y el Deporte como fenómeno social	2h	4h
IV	Fundamentos teóricos y prácticos de la promoción sociocultural como metodología para la gestión del proceso extensionista	2h	8h
Total		12h	18h



Heuristic conversation, joint elaboration, independent work and problem methods are applied as methods; in short, active methods that lead to the cognitive independence of the participants.

The evaluation is carried out through systematic and partial participation in the workshops, the resolution of tasks and the development of a final work that consists of a critical assessment of the obstacles that prevent the development of the university extension in the training of the Career professional.

DISCUSSION

The results obtained in the research show the current state of the upgrading of university teachers from the university extension in the career of Bachelor of Physical Culture and Sport of the University of Pinar del Río "Hermanos Saíz Montes de Oca" and, in turn, they express the need for the subject to occupy space in the training of future professionals.

These results coincide with similar studies carried out by Veitia *et al.* (2020) who consider that teachers should, from all possible angles, improve themselves through the contextualization of academic programs, promote teamwork, grant the role of leading teachers, demand rights and duties and be ethical in the exercise of the profession.

The study of the difficulties revealed in the research allows to affirm that the university extension in professional upgrading for the Career has limitations, in the epistemological and methodological order. In the epistemological order, it accentuates the conflict to conceptualize the term university extension and its different organizational forms, as well as the knowledge that one has of it and the prevalence of a limited approach towards the holistic view that is advocated in current studies of the extensionist process. The problem has led to a disarticulation in its treatment from different spheres of action that leads to a division between the substantive processes. In the methodological order, the existing curricular and extracurricular gap in courses, programs, methodologies and other proposals from the postgraduate level is verified.



Physical culture professionals require an understanding of certain knowledge and skills. The different study plans through which the Career has passed were characterized by adaptations that at each moment required the needs of the professional to improve as a response to the historical context; for this reason, it is considered that the proposed postgraduate course constitutes a valuable instrument for the comprehensive upgrading of this professional, based on a greater knowledge and dissemination of extension contributions, in function of the university.

Currently, research related to university extension has been highlighted, which has strengthened the axiological and integral axis of the study plans, linked to the physical culture sector, such as the study presented by Varisco (2019) and deals with the anthropological issue from the holistic perspective.

From communication, research has been carried out that uses extension to link ties of fraternity and development between the community and the university (Rodriguez, 2019) and the study between the three dimensions teaching, research and extension could not be missing, where the combination of these areas are essential for the comprehensive training of students (Elsegood, 2020).

CONCLUSIONS

The upgrading of university teachers and their link with scientific advances in a postgraduate course, from the university extension, constitutes an expeditious way for a better knowledge, management, preservation and dissemination of intra- and extracurricular activities and in the improvement of quality of life, in order to contribute to forming citizens capable of being, knowing, doing and living together.



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Conflict of interests:

The authors declare not to have any interest conflicts.

Authors' contribution:

The authors have participated in the writing of the work and analysis of the documents



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