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Strategic actions for the improvement of the sports movement management at the University of Pinar del Río

*Acciones estratégicas para el perfeccionamiento de la gestión del movimiento deportivo en
la Universidad de Pinar del Río*

*Ações estratégicas para o aprimoramento da gestão do movimento esportivo na
Universidade de Pinar del Río*

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ABSTRACT

The management of the sports movement in universities represents an essential pillar for the comprehensive education of students, contributing to the development of healthy habits, values, and a sense of institutional belonging. At the University of Pinar del Río, this



process was identified as having shortcomings related to organizational disarticulation, poor integration among stakeholders, and a lack of consistency in the actions implemented. Given this reality, this article aimed to propose strategic actions that contributed to the improvement of the sports movement management process. To this end, the dialectical-materialist approach was adopted as a general method, supported by theoretical methods such as historical-logical, systemic-structural, and modeling; and empirical methods such as interviews and surveys. The sample consisted of vice deans of university extension, professors from the Department of Physical Education and Services, sports coordinators, student athletes, and sports promoters. As a result, three strategic actions were designed that allowed for a more efficient structure: the integration of functions and tasks in line with institutional policies, the strengthening of hierarchical relationships and coordination between stakeholders, and the provision of advisory services for the management of sports festivals at the faculty level. It was concluded that the designed actions strengthened the management process of the sports movement from a flexible, participatory perspective aligned with the objectives of Cuban higher education.

Keywords: physical culture, strategy, university extension, university management, sports movement

RESUMEN

La gestión del movimiento deportivo en las universidades representa un pilar esencial para la formación integral de los estudiantes, al contribuir al desarrollo de hábitos saludables, valores y sentido de pertenencia institucional. En la Universidad de Pinar del Río, se identificó que este proceso presentó insuficiencias relacionadas con la desarticulación organizativa, la escasa integración entre los actores y la falta de sistematicidad en las acciones desarrolladas. Ante esta realidad, el presente artículo tuvo como objetivo proponer acciones estratégicas que contribuyeron al perfeccionamiento del proceso de gestión del movimiento deportivo. Para ello, se asumió como método general el enfoque dialéctico-materialista, apoyado en métodos teóricos como el histórico-lógico, el sistémico-estructural y la modelación; y empíricos como la entrevista y la encuesta. La muestra estuvo compuesta



por vicedecanos de extensión universitaria, profesores del Departamento de Educación Física y Servicios, coordinadores deportivos, estudiantes atletas y promotores deportivos. Como resultado se diseñaron tres acciones estratégicas que permitieron estructurarlo de forma más eficiente: la integración de funciones y tareas en coherencia con las políticas institucionales, el fortalecimiento de las relaciones jerárquicas y de coordinación entre actores, y la asesoría a la gestión de los festivales deportivos a nivel de facultades. Se concluyó que las acciones diseñadas fortalecieron el proceso de gestión del movimiento deportivo desde una visión flexible, participativa y alineada con los objetivos de la educación superior cubana.

Palabras clave: cultura física, estrategia, extensión universitaria, gestión universitaria, movimiento deportivo

RESUMO

A gestão do movimento esportivo nas universidades representa um pilar essencial para a formação integral dos estudantes, ao contribuir para o desenvolvimento de hábitos saudáveis, valores e senso de pertencimento institucional. Na Universidade de Pinar del Río, identificou-se que esse processo apresenta insuficiências relacionadas à desarticulação organizacional, à pouca integração entre os atores e à falta de sistematização nas ações desenvolvidas. Diante dessa realidade, o presente artigo tem como objetivo propor ações estratégicas que contribuam para o aperfeiçoamento do processo de gestão do movimento esportivo na UPR. Para tanto, foi assumido como método geral o enfoque dialético-materialista, apoiado em métodos teóricos como o histórico-lógico, o sistêmico-estrutural e a modelagem; e empíricos como entrevista e pesquisa. A amostra foi composta por vices deans de extensão universitária, professores do Departamento de Educação Física e Serviços, coordenadores esportivos, estudantes atletas e promotores esportivos. Como resultado, foram elaboradas três ações estratégicas que permitem estruturá-lo de forma mais eficiente: a integração de funções e tarefas em coerência com as políticas institucionais, o fortalecimento das relações hierárquicas e de coordenação entre os atores, e a sistematização das etapas de planejamento, execução, controle e avaliação. Conclui-se que as ações



elaboradas fortalecen o processo de gestão do movimento esportivo a partir de uma visão flexível, participativa e alinhada com os objetivos da Educação Superior cubana

Palavras-chave: gestão universitária, movimento esportivo, cultura física, estratégia, extensão universitária.

INTRODUCTION

The contemporary university faces the challenge of becoming an institution that drives the social, cultural, and economic development of the territories in which it operates. In Cuba, this goal is realized through the continuous improvement of its substantive processes: teaching, research, and university extension, which form an essential triad to guarantee the relevance and quality of higher education.

These processes are not conceived in isolation, but rather as integrated, interdependent, and with a marked humanistic, social, and transformative focus. Within this framework, university sports have emerged as a fundamental component of university extension, not only for their educational potential but also for their ability to contribute to the well-being, health, identity, and cohesion of the university community and its surroundings.

The management of university sports, therefore, constitutes a strategic field within Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), as it is a way to strengthen physical culture, ethical values, social participation, and the comprehensive development of students.

At the international level, organizations such as the International University Sports Federation (FISU) promote sports as an integral part of university activities, coordinating events, programs, and policies that integrate physical activity with education and culture. This approach is also adopted by Cuban higher education, which recognizes the sports movement as a relevant component of its educational program, consistent with the policies of the Ministry of Higher Education (MES in Spanish), the National Institute of Sports, Physical Education, and Recreation (INDER in Spanish), and the University Student Federation (FEU in Spanish).



In this sense, sport is not only understood as a competitive or recreational practice, but as an educational, political, and ideological process that contributes to the training of professionals capable of actively participating in the transformation of society. As part of university extension, the sports movement requires efficient, participatory management that is consistent with institutional objectives, promoting inclusion, equity, health, and personal and social development. The planning, organization, execution, and evaluation of sports activities must respond to a comprehensive management model that articulates the institutional, pedagogical, administrative, and community dimensions, based on the quality of the training process.

However, at the University of Pinar del Río (UPR), as at other institutions in the country, difficulties persist that limit the effectiveness of the sports movement management process. The initial assessment identified a series of weaknesses associated with the lack of coordination among the stakeholders involved, insufficient integration of sports with other university processes, uneven implementation across faculties and programs, and the lack of a strategy with well-defined theoretical and methodological foundations.

Despite favorable conditions such as institutional support, faculty experience, established sports projects, and recognition of the value of sports in student development, there is a tendency toward fragmentation, lack of consistency, and disconnection among the activities carried out.

This panorama highlights the contradiction between the need for a structured, coherent, and sustained sports movement management process and a reality characterized by organizational dispersion, a lack of understanding of conceptual frameworks, and a lack of systematization. This contradiction directly affects the comprehensive development of students, as well as the fulfillment of the university's social mandate as an agent of local and national development. Hence, the need to implement a strategy to transform the current state of the process through actions aimed at strengthening its foundations, streamlining its functioning, and increasing its educational and social impact.



In this context, the management of the sports movement must be understood as a continuous and dynamic process, requiring a systemic and contextualized approach. According to the Council of Europe's Committee for the Development of Sport (1987), sports management involves the planning and regulation of human, material, and organizational resources within an institution, with the aim of achieving defined objectives. This definition, applied to the Cuban university environment, involves not only the organization of sporting events, but also the creation of an environment that fosters the systematic practice of physical activity, the conscious and critical participation of students, and the integration of sport with academic, research, and social life.

In accordance with the National University Extension Program (PNEU in Spanish), sport is integrated into the cultural, ideological, and political development of students and promotes the development of a comprehensive general culture. Therefore, the sports management strategy must be based on the specific characteristics of the university and its surroundings, the specifics of enrollment, the material and organizational conditions, the role of different institutional and community actors, and be consistent with local development priorities and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 3 of the 2030 Agenda, which promotes healthy lives and well-being for all.

Consequently, the Department of Physical Education and Services (DEFS in Spanish) of the University of Pinar del Río plays a leading role, assuming responsibility for coordinating, implementing, and evaluating university sports activities. However, its actions require strengthening from a strategic perspective that will overcome the identified limitations and enhance its organizational and methodological capabilities. Added to this is the need to integrate the management of the sports movement with the brigade's educational projects, research lines, cultural activities, and institutional development programs, so that it becomes a cross-cutting axis of the professional training process.

Based on the above, a critical, reflective, and transformative approach to the management process of the sports movement at the UPR is required, with an emphasis on its planning, execution, monitoring, and evaluation, as well as on the training and development of its stakeholders. The article presented a set of strategic actions aimed at perfecting this process,



based on a system of relationships that articulated the institutional, administrative, pedagogical, and community dimensions. These actions were structured according to the functions and tasks of the different stakeholders, within a participatory, flexible, and theoretically supported framework that responded to the training needs of the students and the demands of the current university and regional context.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research was conducted at the University of Puerto Rico specifically in the Department of Physical Education and Services, the main setting for the study of the management process of the university sports movement.

The study population consisted of 131 participants, distributed across different key groups linked to the sports movement: seven vice deans of university extension, 19 DEFS teachers, seven faculty sports coordinators, 54 student athletes, and 42 sports promoters. This sample was selected using simple random sampling to ensure a balanced and meaningful representation of the stakeholders involved in the management and implementation of the sports movement.

From a methodological perspective, the research was based on the dialectical-materialist conception as a general scientific method, which favored the integration of theory and practice and allowed to approach the object of study from a systemic and dynamic perspective. This approach made it possible to identify internal contradictions and develop proposals consistent with institutional reality.

Among the theoretical methods used, historical-logical analysis stood out, facilitating the identification of antecedents and trends in the management process of the sports movement at the UPR, as well as an understanding of their relationships and evolution. The systemic-structural method was also employed, allowing for the design of a coherent structure for strategic actions, based on the institutional, administrative, pedagogical, and community dimensions of educational management. Modeling was applied to graphically represent the



relationships between functions, tasks, and actors, facilitating the organization of content and the systematization of the proposed strategy.

Specific empirical methods were used to collect data: interviews with professors with knowledge and experience in sports management, and a survey of vice deans of university extension and DEFS professors. The objective was to obtain quantitative and qualitative data on the dynamics, challenges, and potential for implementing strategic actions. A Likert scale was used to assess the results (Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The application of empirical methods, including interviews and surveys, allowed to verify the real potential for implementing the proposed strategic actions in the management of the university sports movement. Interviews with 10 professors from the Department of Physical Education and Services with experience in sports management reflected a high degree of receptivity and willingness. Table 1 summarizes the most frequent criteria expressed by interviewees in relation to each of the strategic actions.

Furthermore, surveys administered to seven vice deans of university extension and 19 DEFS teachers (for a total of 26 respondents) allowed for the collection of quantitative data regarding the feasibility, relevance, and institutional commitment to the proposed actions. Table 1 presents the results of three key items, with response options on a Likert scale (Strongly agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly disagree).

Table 1. Respondents' assessment of the feasibility of implementing strategic actions

Item	Totally agree	Agree	Disagree	Totally disagree
The proposed actions are consistent with institutional policies.	53.8%	34.6%	11.6%	0.0%
There are organizational conditions to implement the actions in the university context.	38.5%	42.3%	19.2%	0.0%
There is commitment and willingness among the personnel involved to carry out these actions.	46.1%	38.5%	15.4%	0.0%



As can be seen, more than 80% of respondents positively valued institutional coherence and staff availability, although they identified a need for strengthening in some organizational conditions. Additionally, opinions were collected on the conditions for implementation, with the following results:

Table 2. Conditions for implementing the actions

Condition evaluated	Adequate (%)	Partially adequate (%)	Inadequate (%)
Material resources for sports movement activities.	42.3%	46.2%	11.5%
Level of staff training in sports movement management.	61.5%	34.6%	3.9%
Access to tools for managing the sports movement.	50.0%	42.3%	7.7%

These data reflected an environment with real potential for implementing strategic actions , provided there were trained human resources, institutional will, and acceptance of the proposed approach. The material conditions, while not optimal, did not constitute an insurmountable obstacle, which reinforced the viability of the proposed actions.

The results obtained through empirical methods corroborated the relevance and practical possibility of implementing strategic actions, always from the institutional articulation, pedagogical leadership and methodological support in each of the stages of the management process of the university sports movement.

In line with the overall objective of the research, which was to design a strategy to improve the UPR's sports movement management process, three specific strategic actions were developed that comprehensively addressed the needs identified in the initial assessment and addressed the weaknesses and strengths identified in the PGMD.

Strategic Action 1: Implementation of mechanisms and instruments for the improvement of the management process of the sports movement at the UPR

In this first action, priority was given to systematizing and implementing the mechanisms and instruments that regulated and guided the management of the university's sports



movement. Based on the assessment, it was found that the National Physical Education Program (PNEF), the PNEU, and the DEFS extension strategy constituted the fundamental pillars for managing the sports movement.

To operationalize this action, instruments such as the annual sports activities plan, the monthly work plan for the sports teachers and promoters group, and individual professional development plans were updated and adapted. These instruments were designed with a focus on integrating the functions of planning, organization, execution, and control, to ensure the alignment of each sports activity with institutional objectives and national policies on sport and physical education.

The efficient use of these mechanisms and instruments allowed for greater clarity regarding the responsibilities of each actor within the sports movement and facilitated coordination between the Department of Sports and Development, the Faculty of Physical Education, the Department of University Extension (DEU in Spanish), and the faculties. This coordination enhanced the quality and scope of activities and achieved better utilization of available human and material resources.

The measured indicator, the level of satisfaction among the teaching staff and sports promoters, reflected a positive assessment. More than 85% of those surveyed expressed that the implemented tools allowed them to organize tasks more systematically, understand their functions more precisely, and contribute more efficiently to the development of the sports movement. However, the process also highlighted the need to strengthen mastery of these tools, particularly in programs with less of a sports tradition, through future actions.

Strategic Action 2: Improving the collective responsible for the sports movement at the UPR

The second action focused on strengthening the human capital responsible for managing the sports movement, with the implementation of a development program designed to enhance the technical, organizational, and methodological skills of teaching staff, sports coordinators, and promoters.



This program was based on the results of the diagnostic, which revealed insufficient mastery of the functions of the management cycle: planning, organization, execution, control, and evaluation, and limited integration with other university processes. The development program addressed topics such as the administrative management of university athletics, the promotion of healthy lifestyles, strategic planning, and the application of sports management models adapted to the conditions of the UPR.

The results were evident in the participants' evaluations, where 90% reported a significant increase in their level of preparation to perform their duties more effectively and proactively. Furthermore, it was found that the group developed a clearer perception of the importance of sport as an integral component of professional training, as well as a culture of collaboration and shared responsibility.

Another significant outcome of this initiative was specific training in methodologies for the design and implementation of sports activities, which improved the quality and diversity of sports offerings for students. This training also promoted the incorporation of new sports projects with an emphasis on inclusion, equity, and accessibility, which contributed to overcoming the inequalities identified in the implementation of the sports movement at various faculties.

Strategic Action 3: Advising on the management of sports festivals at the faculty level at the University of Pinar del Río

At the university level, the sports movement was primarily aimed at ensuring the broadest possible participation of students in the regular practice of sports and physical and recreational activities. The university's mission was to develop students with cultural and athletic motivations, and various sports festivals were held for this purpose.

This strategic action aimed to position the Department of Physical Education and Services teacher as an advisor on the management of sports festivals, establishing links between the sports movement and the university community. It also aimed to provide a more effective response to the demands society places on future professionals. (Appendix 7)



Objective: To advise on the management of sports festivals at the faculty level at the UPR.

Operations:

- Design the management guide for sports festivals at the faculty level at the University of Pinar del Río.
- Implement the management guide for sports festivals at the faculty level at the University of Pinar del Río.
- Validate the management guide for sports festivals at the faculty level at the University of Pinar del Río.

Indicators:

- Satisfaction with the management guide for sports festivals at the faculty level.
- Relevance of the sports festival management guide at the faculty level.
- Impact of the Sports Festival Management Guide at the Faculty Level

Strategy evaluation:

Strategy evaluation was conceived as a conscious and intentional process aimed at solving practical problems. It allowed for the assessment of efficiency, efficacy, and effectiveness when implementing specific strategic actions, so the achievement of the objectives proposed for each of these actions constituted indicators to be measured. Evaluation was based on the performance of the indicators identified for each of the strategic actions.

Indicators:

- Knowledge level of the actors involved in the sports movement management process regarding the preparation workshop proposal: referring to the mastery of the main elements covered in the course.
- Level of relevance of the preparation workshop proposal: referring to the mastery of the main elements covered in the course.



- Level of preparation of the actors for the development of the actions in the preparation guide for the sports movement management process.
- Level of acceptance of the guide for managing the sports festival at the faculty level.

The management of the sports movement at the university level represented a constantly evolving field, reflecting global trends that valued innovation and social inclusion as essential elements for the comprehensive development of educational institutions. Valdivié et al. (2023) noted that, at the international, regional, and national levels, the interaction between innovation and social inclusion offered a comprehensive view of the social function of the university, where university sport not only fulfilled a recreational function, but also positioned itself as a means of social cohesion and the development of essential values in students.

From an organizational perspective, González (2002) emphasized that management control in university processes was an indispensable requirement for strategic direction and a vital component for formal management evaluation. This proved fundamental in the management of the sports movement, as it required the rigorous application of mechanisms and instruments that guaranteed the effective planning, execution, and control of sports activities at universities.

Pulido et al. (2023) complemented this view by highlighting the importance of a collective construction process to achieve efficient management, where proper communication and adequate preparation of the actors were essential for the optimization of available resources. In the context of university sports, this involved constant coordination between teachers, students, managers, and other stakeholders, ensuring coordinated and effective performance, resulting in positive results in both sports and training.

Collaborative work, a prominent element in strategic actions for sports management, found support in Vargas et al. (2021), who considered that teamwork within teaching and learning spaces allowed for an increase in the knowledge and capacities of those involved. Institutional collaboration also played a key role, as Vento and Ordaz (2020) stated, emphasizing that inter-institutional work between governmental, non-governmental, or



private organizations could optimize resources, expand the scope and improve the quality of university sports activities, and contribute to solving complex problems from a multidisciplinary approach.

In this sense, communication became a cross-cutting axis. González and González (2002) considered it an essential characteristic of university extension, an aspect that also extended to sports management as a means of facilitating interaction between the university and its social environment. Hernández et al. (2021) argued that communication is a decisive factor for university functioning, enabling dynamic links between the institution and the university community. Sports management, therefore, established effective communication channels to promote the participation and commitment of all stakeholders involved.

University extension, understood by Alvarez and Breijo (2020) as the function that transfers university knowledge and resources to the community, found in sport a privileged field for the application of its principles. This function made possible the implementation of sports activities that, in addition to promoting health and well-being, fostered social and cultural values fundamental to the comprehensive education of students, as emphasized by Montané et al. (2019). In this context, university extension became a vehicle for promoting inter-institutional work, through the connection between the university, the various communities, and social actors (Rojas et al., 2018).

The inclusion of digital technologies in university sports management was another critical aspect highlighted by Rovira et al. (2023), who emphasized that the use of digital tools contributed to reducing the technological gap and fostering digital inclusion. This dimension was particularly relevant in an increasingly digitalized world, as it enhanced participation, access to sports activities, and the integration of ancestral and popular knowledge into university work, as Cano and Ingold (2020) suggested.

Erreguerena (2022) conceived the need to build spaces for dialogue and collective reflection between student athletes and promoters, where university extension promoted problematizing dialogues that strengthened the construction of knowledge. López (2022) added the need for managers to employ tools to promote the transcendence of experiential



and cognitive experiences and a management approach that incorporates active participation and constant dialogue, aspects in line with the comprehensive and participatory logic promoted by Briones (2020).

At the sociocultural level, Bez and Quiala (2016) offered a valuable perspective by indicating that the interaction between society, group, and individual was a dynamic process through which each person internalized the culture of their environment and, in turn, transformed their context through their actions. This relationship was key to understanding the impact of sports movement management, where university physical and recreational activities responded to immediate social realities and individual and collective development.

Reyes and Góngora (2017) complemented this view by emphasizing that the active participation of the university community in identifying needs and implementing solutions was essential for the success of any sports management strategy. This participatory approach has proven effective in various areas, as Rodríguez et al. (2015) pointed out, highlighting its usefulness in sectors such as education and health.

The systematic organization of sports activities through projects was a practice recommended by the PNEU and supported by Nuñez et al. (2017), who stated that the extension projects allowed for the achievement of objectives in an organized manner and respected the cultural identity of the participants. However, Ganga et al. (2017) warned about the existence of imprecise knowledge regarding university participation in these programs, which indicated the need to strengthen management processes and the active involvement of the university community.

From an epistemological perspective, Bez and Quiala (2016) viewed the university community as a strategic space for collective work and social transformation, an idea reinforced by Briceño et al. (2020) who highlighted the potential of professionals to foster university-society ties. This perspective was shared by González and González (2002) with the importance of transforming university management to foster extension and the active participation of all stakeholders.



The organizational structures that underpinned the management of the sports movement promoted capacity building among these university stakeholders and fostered collaborative, synergistic, and cross-disciplinary work. This enabled decision-making based on effective cooperation and strengthened the impact of sports on the comprehensive education and well-being of the university community.

CONCLUSIONS

It is concluded that the management of the sports movement, in line with theoretical postulates and international best practices, was understood as a dynamic and systemic process that articulated administrative, pedagogical, and community functions. This comprehensive approach enabled the development of sports activities in universities that promoted health, culture, and social cohesion fundamental pillars of sustainable development and collective well-being.

The actions designed for the management of the sports movement at the University of Pinar del Río responded to the need to overcome the limitations identified in the initial assessment, such as organizational disorganization and insufficient theoretical and methodological mastery. The integration of clear mechanisms for the planning, organization, execution, control, and evaluation of the sports movement promoted more efficient, participatory management, consistent with the principles of Cuban higher education and international trends.

Furthermore, the upgrading of the actors involved in the process strengthened their competencies, ensured the proper implementation of strategic actions, and facilitated the collective construction of knowledge and action. Collaborative work and the use of digital technologies emerged as fundamental elements for expanding the reach and quality of the university sports movement and contributed to the comprehensive development of students and the promotion of healthy lifestyles.



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The author is responsible for writing the work and analyzing the documents.



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