

Modelo de gestión para medir la superación cultural del diferido militar en el pregrado

Management model to measure the cultural improvement of the undergraduate military deferment

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RESUMEN: El proceso de superación cultural de los diferidos de las Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias en Cuba, es realizado por el Centro Universitario Municipal en unidades militares. El objetivo fundamental de este estudio radica en conocer el impacto alcanzado en la gestión de dicho proceso en la formación de pregrado, empleándose para su cumplimiento el método sistémico-estructural-funcional. Los resultados alcanzados evidencian la factibilidad y eficiencia de dicha superación en el pregrado.

Palabras clave: Diferidos; Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias; Pregrado; Superación cultural; Impacto

ABSTRACT: The process of cultural improvement of the deferred of the Revolutionary Armed Forces in Cuba is carried out by the Municipal University Center in military units. The main objective of this study is to know the impact achieved in the management of this process in the undergraduate training, using the systemic-structural-functional method. The results obtained show the feasibility and efficiency of this process in undergraduate education.

Keywords: Deferred of the Revolutionary Armed Forces; cultural improvement; professional improvement

Introduction

Countless changes are occurring in the different social, economic and political spheres, which impose the urgent need to train individuals who are fully capable of facing the demands of development in its different facets. In this regard, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) insist on the need for ongoing preparation of human resources to meet these challenges.

From this perspective, target 4.3 of goal four of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, approved in 2015 by the United Nations General Assembly (UN), calls for “ensuring equal access for all men and women to quality technical, vocational and higher education, including university education” (United Nations General Assembly, 2015, p. 6).

In accordance with the purpose of goal 4.3, the conceptualization of the Cuban Economic and Social Model of Socialist Development approved at the eighth Congress of the Communist Party of Cuba (PCC, 2021, p. 22) in its subsection g, highlights the need to:

Consolidate the role of universities in the formation and improvement of competent professionals, committed to the values of our socialist society and the strengthening of relations with scientific centers, production entities, services and armed institutions, with particularity in the territories.

Therefore, the authors of this research agree with these elements framed in these laws and resolutions, which allow a characterization of the need for this process and the mechanisms to be taken into account for its development.

In this sense, the cultural improvement of the deferred FAR, has been a subject addressed and directed by Cuban higher education, given to young people with military careers as leveling course before entering the university, this with a prioritized attention it constitutes a necessary aspect for the improvement of these individuals in society, as well as the socio-educational, cultural and political impact achieved, in correspondence with the results that in the academic order this contributes.

The cultural improvement of the deferred FAR in Cuba is covered by Circular No.01/11 of the Ministry of Higher Education (MES), which specifies the methodology for its implementation, as well as the programs of the different subjects to be taught with their general and specific objectives, contents, skills and changes to be implemented in each course. It also designs those responsible for this task. Circular No.01/11

There are several researchers who have addressed the issue of cultural improvement of the FAR deferred, which have made important contributions, in that sense the works of researchers, Rodriguez, Gil and Garcia (2012); Sanchez (2016), Jorin and Correa (2016), among others aimed at vocational training, motivation, in different aspects of military soldiers, but none based on the

evaluation of its impact, stand out. Therefore, aligning this research demands a full management that allows the organization and planning of this process.

Hence, the objective was focused to propose a theoretical-methodological model of management of the evaluation of the impact of the cultural improvement of the FAR deferred in undergraduate training.

Development

Active military service received by young people is defined worldwide as deferment of military service. Similarly, in this context, leveling courses have been implemented as a measure for the training and improvement of young people in active military service, with the aim that these young people continue with their professional studies at the end of it, highlighting countries such as Venezuela, Finland and Korea, among others. According to the researcher, these measures strengthen the academic level of these young people in a differentiated context.

Also, at the national level, the Cuban Revolution has increased laws for young people who receive the Active Military Service (SMA), according to Law No. 75 "Military Service Law" of the Republic of Cuba, the deferral of the Revolutionary Armed Forces (FAR) allows young people with university and professional technical careers to fulfill their compulsory military service for a period of 14 months, and then continue with their university studies. This measure, implemented in the 1960s, guarantees access to higher education without interrupting studies.

Cuban youths initially received the Active Military Service (AMS) developing only combative preparation, for such reasons in the VIII Congress of the Union of Young Communists (UJC), held in Havana in December 2004, represented a significant milestone in the field of cultural improvement of young people in active military service, especially those in the deferred modality of the Revolutionary Armed Forces (FAR). This event not only highlighted the importance of education and the integral formation of these young people, but also proposed new strategies for their academic development, where they decided to receive teaching or academic training during the development of the same.

For this reason, the country's leadership took all the pertinent measures, which marked a significant change in the attention given to their education before starting university. From then on, cultural improvement became a key focus, promoting an education system that would adapt to the

university study profiles of these young people. To carry out this initiative, agreements were established between the Ministry of the FAR, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Higher Education to implement accessible study programs within military facilities, through a program called cultural improvement.

The implementation of the Cultural Improvement Program began in the 2005-2006 school year, initially in seven military units, and was expanded to 41 units in the 2009-2010 school year, benefiting more than 1700 deferred and Order 18 soldiers. This program sought to provide young people with tools and resources that would facilitate their entry into higher education, ensuring that their training would not be interrupted during their military service. It was then extended to all military units in the country where there were FAR deferrals.

The congress and the implementation of this educational program reflect an effort on the part of the Cuban government to meet the demands of academic training in this military service context. This approach not only sought to improve the education of FAR deferred personnel, but also to contribute to their personal and integral development, ensuring that they were prepared to assume roles in the defense of the homeland and in post-service civilian life. In summary, the VIII Congress of the UJC was a turning point that promoted the cultural improvement of young people in military service, establishing a normative and educational framework that sought to integrate their training needs with the demands of the Cuban socio-political context.

The Cuban scientific educational community is currently working to improve the diversified attention to those deferred from the FAR for their subsequent entry into universities. One of the advantages is the transformations made to this program of cultural improvement throughout its implementation, such as the changes and transformations necessary for its consolidation and execution with the required quality.

In spite of the fact that there are insufficient studies carried out in this area from the scientific point of view, researchers who have made incursions into this subject reveal the absence of a rigorous follow-up and evaluation system that allows the measurement of the real impact of the program, the lack of concrete data prevents adjustments to be made to improve the effectiveness of cultural enhancement. Therefore, it is up to the CUM to manage this process to measure the impact obtained.

The above was corroborated in the empirical inquiries carried out during this research, as well as by the author's experience as director of the Caimanera Municipal University Center (CUM) and founding professor of the cultural improvement program of the FAR deferred students.

Methods and Techniques employed

The research took into account various methods and techniques that allowed the collection of data for the systematization of the historical background of the evaluation process of cultural improvement such as: surveys, interviews, observations of leaders, deferred students, military personnel, professors, which made it possible to know that there is no mechanism to evaluate the impact of the cultural improvement of the FAR deferred and its management. On the other hand, these methods have allowed the construction of the theoretical framework and the diagnostic study that have made possible the characterization of the current state of the object of study and the field of action.

Other theoretical methods for the fulfillment of the research tasks were the structural-functional systemic method and the modeling method, used for the design of the management model.

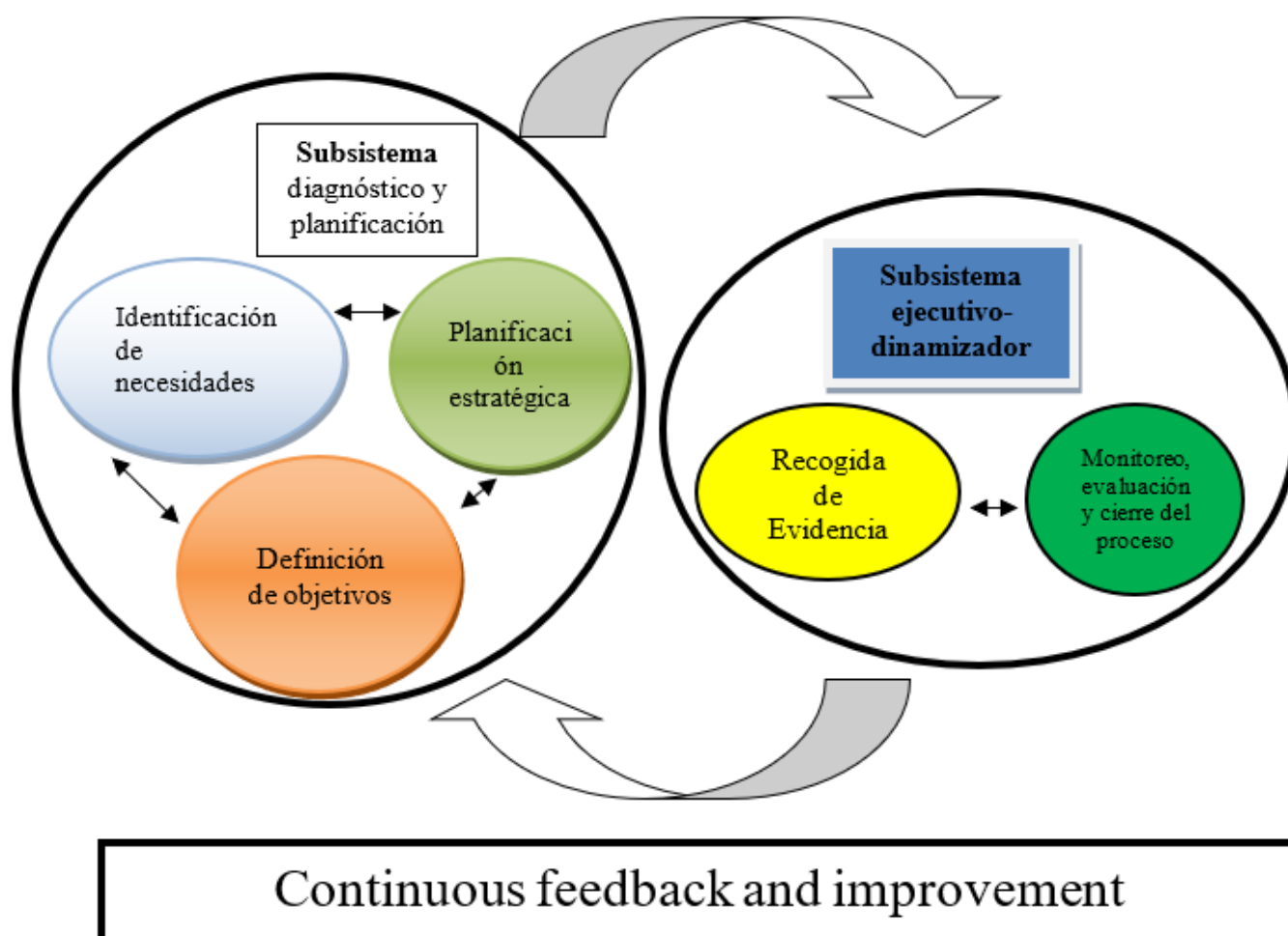
Elaboration of the management model to measure the impact of the cultural improvement of FAR deferred personnel and its management from the CUM

For this reason, the researcher set out to develop a management model to evaluate the impact of the cultural enhancement received by these young people and the management of this process. The objective of the management model is to determine the impact of the cultural enhancement program received by the FAR deferred students and its management.

It is important to point out that the management model is based on a methodology for the solution of this problem. **The variable of the study:** "the evaluation of the impact of the cultural enhancement of the FAR deferred students on undergraduate training and its management was operationalized in two dimensions and their indicators. The dimension "Academic, socio-political-cultural and educational performance of the FAR deferred" and **Dimension II: Evaluation process of the impact of the cultural enhancement of the FAR deferred and its management, as shown below.**

Figure 1

Outline of the theoretical-methodological model of management of the evaluation of the impact of the cultural improvement of FAR deferrals in undergraduate education.



Source: Self elaboration

The **subsystem of diagnosis and planning** has as objective to carry out a diagnosis of the problems and needs of cultural enhancement. It also has three components that allowed a better vision of how the program is conceived and provides the key elements for its planning and implementation, and the **subsystem Executive-dynamizing** allows to achieve better results in the integral evaluation of the process of cultural enhancement of the FAR deferred students in undergraduate training through its set of interrelated components.

Among the actions of the first subsystem, the following were determined: **to carry out an exhaustive diagnosis that made possible to ascertain the needs of the FAR deferred students in the application of the program, as well as the needs of the CUM for the correct implementation of the program, and to ascertain key elements that prevent the evaluation of**

its impact, such as the absence of indicators and dimensions in the guidelines set out in Circular 1/2011.

On the other hand, the key objectives with which the subsystem worked to achieve the desired goal were defined. Likewise, a strategic planning was carried out, involving the design of the training program and the selection of appropriate methodologies and educational resources that allowed feedback, which reduces entropy and preserves homeostasis.

In this sense, the diagnostic and planning subsystem is crucial for the direction and orientation of the system, ensuring its proper functioning and capacity for self-management (autopoiesis). The interaction between subsystems not only improves the evaluative process, but also strengthens the system's capacity to respond to changing demands in the educational context.

In order to achieve the necessary feedback to maintain the system's autopoiesis, systematic control and evaluation mechanisms are implemented in the different processes that converge in the induction of adjustments and improvements. The information obtained through these processes becomes an invaluable resource for the system, allowing it to make informed decisions and make the necessary readjustments to ensure its optimal functioning.

Among the key elements for this subsystem we can highlight the following:

1. aspects of the deferrals: the opinions and experiences of the deferrals were collected regarding their training, related to their motivation and professional interests.
2. Observation of content: external factors that influence education were evaluated, such as socioeconomic, cultural and technological trends that affect students and the institution (CUM).
3. Identification of methods and techniques for data collection: various techniques are used, such as surveys, interviews, to obtain qualitative and quantitative information that allows for an accurate diagnosis.
4. Continuous evaluation: This component also involves a process of constant review and updating of needs and perspectives, ensuring that the model remains relevant and effective over time.

For the components of the diagnosis and planning subsystem, the following elements were taken into account to characterize them:

1. Evaluation of each identified need and the determination of the actors and the time to implement solutions.

2. Assessment of the impact that the attention to each need could have on the integral development of the students as well as the satisfaction of the deferred.
3. Prioritization: by those responsible for planning (CUM) to focus on the most critical areas,
4. Design and plan specific actions that solve the needs of greater impact, thus facilitating the continuous improvement of the educational process.
5. Control and periodic review of the needs, allowing adjustments according to changes in the educational context and in the conditions of the deferred students.

Consequently, the variable under study: impact evaluation of the cultural enhancement of FAR deferred students in undergraduate education was operationalized in a set of criteria and indicators referring to the most important elements that characterize it, as shown below:

✓ **Relevance of the cultural enhancement program**

1. Correspondence between the contents of the cultural enhancement program and the educational and cultural demands of the deferred students.
2. Level of alignment of the cultural enhancement program with institutional policies.
3. Percentage of deferred students who actively participate in the proposed activities.

✓ **Effectiveness of cultural enhancement in achieving the desired results in undergraduate deferred students**

1. Number of deferred students with improved academic performance,
- 2 Comparison between the results achieved by FAR deferrals before and after the implementation of the program.
- 3 Results achieved in the grades of the FAR deferrals in undergraduate after program implementation.
- 4 Retention and graduation rate of the deferrals after receiving the cultural enhancement program.
- 5 Number of undergraduate courses that incorporate elements related to cultural enhancement.

✓ **Level of sustainability of FAR deferred students**

- 1- To analyze whether the knowledge acquired during the cultural enhancement program is maintained over time.

- 2- To analyze the follow-up of the CUM to the continuity of the deferred in the participation to activities in the professional work.
- 3- To know experiences on the impact of cultural improvement.
- 4- To know the Social impact of the cultural improvement in the deferred FAR.
- 5- To analyze through conversations the changes generated in the university and local community as a result of the cultural improvement of the deferred ones.
- 6- To measure the participation of the FAR deferred students in community projects that reflect the application of the knowledge acquired during the cultural improvement program.

The subsystem **executive-dynamizing of the EI-SC-DFAR-FP** consists of a set of interrelated components that enable program implementation, monitoring and evaluation aimed at improving student learning. This subsystem focuses on ensuring that interventions are effective, relevant and sustainable. This subsystem ensures the implementation of the actions of the evaluation plan, receiving information from the guiding subsystem and feeding back to update itself. Its key elements are described below: it is composed of two main components: A) the collection of evidence on the impact of the cultural improvement of FAR deferrals associated with the results in undergraduate training and B) the closure of the EI-SC-DFAR-FP process.

Regarding the collection of evidence, this is an essential component of the executive-dynamizing subsystem of the EI- SC-DFAR-FP consists of a systematic and structured process that seeks to obtain data and evidence to measure and analyze the effects of educational interventions on cultural enhancement. This process is crucial to determine the effectiveness and relevance of the implemented program. The key aspects of this component are described below: **definition of objectives, data processing, instrument design, and selection of participants, analysis and interpretation of results.**

1. **The definition of objectives** is fundamental to guide and structure the evaluative process of the (EI-SC-DFAR-FP). This element implies establishing clear and precise goals that will guide all evaluation activities, ensuring that they are aligned with the needs and expectations of the learners and the educational community.

Therefore, this definition allows identifying the specific purpose of the evaluation, facilitating the formulation of relevant and pertinent research questions. These objectives should be formulated in

a measurable and achievable manner, which provides a framework for data collection and subsequent analysis.

In addition, this subcomponent plays a crucial role in the strategic planning of the evaluation process. By establishing clear objectives, it facilitates the identification of indicators that will measure the success of cultural improvement interventions. This, in turn, allows for a more effective evaluation of the impact of the implemented program, ensuring that the results obtained are meaningful and useful for the continuous improvement of undergraduate training.

In summary, the definition of objectives is an essential process that not only guides evaluation, but also establishes the basis for informed decision making and the implementation of improvements to the cultural enhancement program.

2. Data processing: begins with the collection of data through previously designed instruments such as surveys, questionnaires, interviews and observations. This phase is essential to ensure that the data collected is relevant, accurate and reliable, allowing for proper analysis. Data collection focuses on measuring the indicators defined in the first subsystem, using the sources of information and the necessary triangulation for each indicator.

Data processing, on the other hand, focuses on the function and analysis of the information obtained during the evaluation. This subcomponent transforms the data into meaningful information, facilitating the evaluation of the impact of educational interventions. The process includes the organization and cleaning of data to ensure its quality and relevance, followed by the application of analytical techniques, such as statistical analysis and data visualization, to identify patterns and trends in the effectiveness of cultural enhancement programs.

This subcomponent is crucial for the interpretation of results, as it helps to identify areas of success and opportunities for improvement in the interventions. In addition, data processing contributes to the production of clear and concise reports that summarize findings and recommendations, thus supporting informed decision making by education stakeholders. In summary, data processing is a key element that ensures effective analysis of the information, allowing a deep understanding of the impact of the cultural enhancement program and fostering continuous improvement in undergraduate education.

4. **The Instrument design** focuses on the creation and adaptation of tools that facilitate the collection of relevant data for evaluation. This process is fundamental to ensure that the information obtained is accurate, reliable and relevant to measure its impact.

5. The design of instruments involves the development of surveys, questionnaires, interview guides and observation protocols, all aligned with the objectives of the evaluation. These instruments must be carefully structured to capture information that effectively reflects the indicators defined in previous phases of the evaluation process. The clarity and validity of the items are essential to ensure that the data collected are meaningful and useful.

This subcomponent plays a crucial role in the success of the evaluation, since the quality of the instruments determines the quality of the data obtained. Adequate design allows not only the collection of quantitative information, but also the exploration of qualitative aspects that can provide a deeper insight into the impact of the cultural enhancement program. In summary, instrument design is a key element that contributes to the effectiveness of the evaluation process, ensuring that solid and relevant evidence is collected for informed decision making.

4. Participant selection refers to the process of identifying and choosing the individuals who will be part of the evaluation study. This process is essential to ensure that the sample is representative and that the results obtained are valid and generalizable.

The selection of participants involves defining clear inclusion and exclusion criteria, ensuring that those individuals who can provide relevant information on the impact of the interventions are chosen. This includes considering demographic, academic and socioeconomic characteristics that may influence participants' experience with cultural enhancement programs.

This subcomponent plays a crucial role in minimizing selection bias, which can affect the validity of the results. By carefully selecting participants, we seek to ensure that observed differences in outcomes are attributable to the interventions evaluated and not to external factors. In addition, an adequate selection of participants allows meaningful comparisons to be made between groups, facilitating the analysis of the impact of interventions in diverse populations. In summary, the selection of participants is a fundamental element that contributes to the quality and reliability of the evaluation, ensuring that the data collected accurately reflect the impact of the cultural enhancement program on undergraduate education.

5. The Analysis and interpretation of results focuses on the systematic evaluation of the data collected during the evaluation process. This subcomponent is crucial for transforming the information into meaningful conclusions about the impact of EI-SC-DFAR-FP.

The analysis of results involves the organization and processing of data using statistical and qualitative methods to identify meaningful patterns, trends and relationships. This process is not

only limited to the simple presentation of figures, but seeks to understand the context behind the data, assessing how the interventions have influenced student performance and development.

The interpretation of the results is equally important, as it allows the findings to be contextualized in terms of the objectives established and the needs identified at the beginning of the evaluation process. Through this interpretation, areas of success and opportunities for improvement can be identified, providing a solid basis for the formulation of recommendations and informed decision making by stakeholders.

In summary, the analysis and interpretation of results is an essential component that ensures that the information obtained during the evaluation is used effectively, facilitating a deep understanding of the impact of the cultural enhancement program and supporting continuous improvement in undergraduate education.

b) The purpose of the component **closure of the process** represents the final stage in which the data and evidence obtained during the evaluation are integrated and analyzed. This component is fundamental to ensure that the results are used effectively in the continuous improvement of the educational program. Closure involves the completion of all activities related to the evaluation, including data collection, analysis of results and formulation of recommendations.

This process seeks to consolidate the information gathered, assess the impact of the interventions on undergraduate education, and prepare reports summarizing the findings and conclusions. It also focuses on providing feedback to stakeholders such as students, teachers and administrators, promoting transparency and participation in the improvement process.

Closure also ensures that all activities have been carried out properly and that the proposed objectives have been achieved. This includes verification of content compliance, review of results and evaluation of team performance. In addition, lessons learned are documented for future actions. Delivery of final reports and communication of results to stakeholders are key aspects of this phase. The reports will include actions to address identified weaknesses, an improvement plan and recommendations for decision making to optimize the process. In summary, process closure is carried out in an organized and efficient manner, thus facilitating a successful transition to the next stages of the program.

This component includes the following actions: **evaluation summary report** involving verification of compliance, **analysis and evaluation of results**, evaluation of team performance, documentation of lessons learned, **elaboration of final reports, communication of results**,

elaboration of actions for the improvement of the evaluation process of the impact of cultural enhancement of FAR deferrals in undergraduate training.

The elaboration of the **evaluation summary report** consists of writing a document that synthesizes the findings and conclusions of the evaluation process. Its main purpose is to clearly and concisely communicate the results to stakeholders. This report answers the questions and objectives that gave rise to the evaluation, providing relevant information to the applicants and other professionals involved, while creating a documentary record for future reference and suggesting specific interventions based on the results.

In terms of structure and content, the report includes a detailed description of the program, and the activity evaluated, covering aspects such as objectives, expected results, budget, location and beneficiaries. A summary of the methodology used is also presented, ensuring the validity and reliability of the findings. In addition, the findings and conclusions are synthesized, supported by evidence and reliable data, and the degree of compliance with the expected results is evaluated. Recommendations for improvement or continuity of the program are also included.

Regarding the format, the summary report should be concise, ideally two to three pages, written in a clear and logical manner so that it is accessible to any reader. It can be organized in two sections: one describing the characteristics of the research and the other highlighting its significance and implications. In summary, the preparation of the summary report is an essential component for effectively communicating the results of the evaluation, thus facilitating decision making and continuous improvement of the impact of the cultural enhancement of FAR deferrals in undergraduate training.

The **analysis and evaluation of the results obtained** in the cultural enhancement impact assessment plays a critical role in the in-depth understanding of the data collected and its impact. This process allows for the identification of significant patterns and trends in the data, relating them to the questions, objectives and criteria established in the evaluation. Through a comparison of the results with expected indicators and benchmarks, as well as with findings from similar evaluations, the program's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats are highlighted.

In addition, the identification of factors that influence the results, both positively and negatively, becomes an essential part of the analysis. This aspect allows making judgments and interpretations based on the evidence collected, which in turn supports the conclusions and recommendations presented.

The analysis also facilitates the identification and summary of key findings, establishing a clear relationship between these results and the degree of compliance with the objectives and goals established at the beginning of the process. The assessment of the impact and effectiveness of the evaluated program is, therefore, necessary to support decision-making and the formulation of recommendations for future improvements.

Conclusions

To conclude, the limitations presented by the planning and organization of the cultural improvement of FAR deferred personnel and its management from the CUM for its continuous improvement were evidenced. This demonstrates the need to develop a management model that allows the evaluation of this process to solve the problem.

The activities and indicators designed will achieve better performance in the management of cultural enhancement since they will allow measuring its impact.

During the process of socialization of scientific contributions, favorable criteria, recommendations and comments were issued, which made it possible to improve the proposal.

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