

University-Level Methods for Developing Pedagogical Charisma

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Abstract

The formation of pedagogical charisma in university education has become an increasingly relevant concern amid contemporary educational transformations, which require teachers to possess extensive skills beyond the cognitive dimension of teaching. Although teaching and methodological strategies are frequently analyzed in the literature, the charismatic dimension of the university professor is less explored as an implicit factor of motivation, involvement and personal development of students. Pedagogical charisma is approached in this study as a developable professional competence, built through communicative, relational and emotional behaviors specific to the educational context. The purpose of the article is to clarify the concept of pedagogical charisma and to substantiate a conceptual model of its formation at the university level. The approach has a theoretical-analytical character and aims to identify the main dimensions of pedagogical charisma, as well as training strategies that can be integrated into master's programs in education and communication. The results of the analysis highlight that the formation of pedagogical charisma can be structured around components such as professional skills, pedagogical conduct adapted to students, empathetic communicative interactions, relevant personality traits, and the creation of a positive educational climate that stimulates learning motivation. The idea that the charismatic teacher is perceived as a facilitator of learning and a value benchmark, capable of positively influencing the intrinsic motivation, involvement and responsibility of students towards their own educational path, is outlined

Keywords: charisma, pedagogical charisma; methods, university training.

Introduction

Contemporary transformations in education place the university professor in a complex role that integrates professional skills, axiological dimensions, and the ability to positively influence students' development. In this context, pedagogical charisma is relevant as an expression of the interaction among teaching skills, professional conduct, personality traits, and the educational climate created in the teaching-learning process.

Contemporary literature treats charisma as a developable competence, based on communicative, relational and emotional behaviors that can be learned and practiced in structured educational contexts. Empirical studies demonstrate that formative interventions

oriented towards charismatic tactics lead to an increase in the teacher's impact on students' motivation, engagement and personal development (Conger & Kanungo, 1998; Towler, 2003; Antonakis et al., 2011).

Current university training increasingly capitalizes on the communicative, emotional and relational dimension of the educational act, highlighting the role of the teacher as a mentor and facilitator of professional development.

Charisma as a concept

Defining charisma remains difficult, as the term describes both a quality attributed to a person and a perception built by those around them. In the sociological tradition, charisma is understood as a rare "gift" not accessible to everyone (Weber, 1968). From a psychological perspective, House (1977) links it to the strong influence exerted by a leader: through personal resources (self-confidence, firm beliefs, the desire to lead and produce change), the leader can generate special effects on followers, who end up trusting him, accepting his value system and raising his performance standards.

Another line of interpretation emphasizes the relational and projective character of charisma: it can be seen as a "hypothetical" trait, which takes shape in the imagination and feelings of others (Blašková et al., 2018). In the same spirit, charisma is described as a mixture of personal charm and emotional impact, capable of arousing loyalty, devotion, and enthusiasm, and of stimulating self-regulation and "self-leadership" among those who follow the leader (Blašková et al., 2018). In the literature on communication and leadership, charisma is associated with how the leader interacts and behaves in relation to others (Bolkan & Goodboy, 2014).

In the organizational environment, Conger (1985) shows that charismatic leadership is distinguished from non-charismatic leadership by relatively separable components, such as vision, inspiration, and the ability to mobilize emotionally. Later, Conger and Kanungo (1987) emphasize the idea that charisma is not only an internal property of the person, but the result of the perception of followers, influenced by the qualities, values and beliefs of the leader, but also by the way followers relate to themselves and the relationship. In contemporary approaches, charisma is no longer considered exceptional or rare, being analyzed in various contexts; Neo-charismatics emphasize that the "strength" of charisma depends a lot on the delivery style (expressive, emotional), not just on the content of the message (Antonakis et al., 2011). This leads to an important idea: concrete behaviors in communication become a central indicator when we study charisma.

Pedagogical charisma

In educational contexts, the teacher can also be understood as a class leader, as he coordinates activities, group dynamics and learning processes (Archer, 1993; Ștefănescu et al., 2020). The academic pressure experienced by students, especially in university education, underscores the importance of the teacher-student relationship and the classroom climate (Blašková et al., 2018). In assessing the quality of higher education, teachers' behaviors and attitudes emerge as decisive benchmarks in how students rate their learning experience (Huang & Lin, 2014). From this perspective, pedagogical charisma becomes a potential implicit "engine" of motivation: the teacher activates their personal and relational resources, and students respond with involvement, satisfaction, and openness to learning (Blašková et al., 2018).

Empirical research, although still relatively limited, outlines relatively stable dimensions of the didactic charisma. In a tool built for the academic environment, Huang and Lin (2014) propose four determinants: knowledge, character traits, teaching techniques and humor. Students tend to describe the charismatic teacher as being well-prepared in the discipline taught, methodologically competent, approachable and patient, but also able to use humor in a way that supports learning. Converging with this idea, it has been shown that teachers perceived as "good" combine content competence with pedagogical competence (Koehler & Mishra, 2009), and the importance of methodology remains strongly supported in studies of teaching (Voss & Gruber, 2006). Humor, when authentic and appropriate, can facilitate information processing and positive classroom climate (Huang & Lin, 2014).

Another approach operationalizes the didactic charisma through observable behaviors in interaction. Bolkan and Goodboy (2014) show that the perception of charisma is fueled by: nonverbal communication (reducing psychological and physical distance through voice, expressiveness, presence), humor, care (real interest in progress and well-being, including through regular feedback) and confirmation (messages that express confidence in the student's abilities and encourage him to aim for difficult goals). In addition, students evaluate the performance of the charismatic teacher as more effective and satisfying, in a way comparable to the leader-follower relationship in leadership theories (Bolkan & Goodboy, 2014).

At the pre-university level, an extensive study highlights that "charisma through knowledge" can weigh the most in the evaluation of the charismatic teacher, followed by the methodological and character dimensions; humor mostly supports momentary interest, but its influence on stable interest in learning may be more modest than the other dimensions (Lee et al., 2014).

The Charismatic Teacher

The charismatic teacher supports student-centered educational processes, stimulates autonomy and responsibility in learning and contributes to building a positive climate, favorable to academic performance and the development of career skills. In this sense, pedagogical charisma goes beyond an individual trait and is the result of a systematic process of professional training.

A. M. Anderson (2023) highlights that charismatic teaching encompasses "*the teacher's professional knowledge, positive character traits, sense of humor, and qualitative teaching techniques*," all of which are strongly correlated with students' intrinsic motivation. Empirical research claims that dimensions such as the teacher's oratorical skills and formative vision, sense of humor or devotion to students significantly influence their intrinsic motivation. In this context, the formation of *the pedagogical charisma* at the university level must address both theoretical foundations and the development of the teacher's attitudes and practical skills (A. M. Anderson, 2023)

Within our approach, we defined a conceptual model of pedagogical charisma with five main components: (1) theoretical benchmarks regarding professional competences and pedagogical charisma, (2) exceptional professional conduct adapted to students' needs (passion, tolerance, resilience, stress management, assertiveness), (3) empathic communicative interactions and fascination (enthusiasm and inspiration for students' personal development), (4) personality traits (discipline emotional expressiveness, personal integrity, etc.) and (5) positive stimulating climate for learning. Each component will be

further detailed through training indicators, performance descriptors and development strategies at the level of master's students.

The study programs of the master's degree – *Education for Communication and Professional Career and Management and Communication in Educational Institutions* – include courses and competencies that correspond to these components (e.g. courses in educational leadership, managerial communication and emotional culture) and can be leveraged for the implementation of strategies for the formation of pedagogical charisma. For example, the course "*The Art of Professional Discourse*" develops oratorical expressiveness and empathy skills, and "*Leadership and Management*" emphasizes integrity and stress management, key elements of pedagogical charisma.

University education

Component 1. Theoretical benchmarks on professional competences and pedagogical charisma

The theoretical component involves the assimilation of knowledge about teaching skills, educational leadership and the definition of pedagogical charisma. Recent studies show that this competence has evolved from a personality trait to a complex professional competence. Key concepts such as *fluency in communication*, *self-confidence*, *authenticity*, and the teacher's passion are addressed, all of which are relevant characteristics of charisma. The understanding of these notions provides the basis on which the subsequent formation of the pedagogical charism is built.

Table 1. Theoretical Landmarks of Pedagogical Charisma Formation: Indicators, Descriptors and Training Strategies

Training indicators	Performance descriptors	Training strategies for master's students
– Knowledge of theories of teaching competences and leadership	– Explain the concepts of <i>professional competence</i> and <i>educational leadership</i>	– Theoretical studies (courses, seminars) on professional skills and leadership topics
– Understanding the definition of pedagogical charism	– Gives definitions of pedagogical charisma and explains the historical evolution of the concept	– Analysis of specialized literature; elaboration of summaries and essays on the theme of charism
– Knowledge of key features and components	– Identify concrete examples of charismatic traits in teachers (empathy, passion, etc.)	– Debates and case studies illustrating models of the charismatic teacher; group discussions about their role.

In the first direction, the emphasis is placed on acquiring knowledge of the theories of teaching competencies and educational leadership. At the performance level, this is reflected in the master's students' ability to explain the concepts of professional competence and educational leadership, and at the training level, it is supported by theoretical studies conducted in specialised courses and seminars.

A second dimension aims at understanding the definition of pedagogical charism. Performance descriptors reveal the ability to render relevant definitions of pedagogical charisma and to explain the historical evolution of this concept, skills developed through the analysis of the specialized literature, as well as through the elaboration of summaries and essayistic works focused on the theme of charisma.

Next, we highlight the importance of knowing the key features and components of pedagogical charisma. From a performance perspective, master's students can identify concrete examples of charismatic traits in teachers, such as empathy or a passion for teaching. The training strategies associated with this dimension include debates, case studies and group discussions, designed to illustrate models of charismatic teachers and to stimulate reflection on their role in the educational process.

Component 2. Exceptional professional conduct tailored to students: passion, tolerance, resilience, stress management, assertiveness

This component focuses on the teacher's attitudes and behaviors in relation to students. The charismatic teacher shows enthusiasm and passion for the subject, encouraging students' interest. He is tolerant and understanding of the diversity of students' needs and challenges, demonstrating patience and empathy. Also, a charismatic teacher is resilient, manages to overcome stress and professional failures, acting as a model of adaptability for students. Through assertive communication, the teacher expresses expectations and feedback in a respectful and firm way, balancing authority with understanding. Thus, attitudes such as positive stress management and the ability to support students in difficult times help to create an atmosphere of trust.

Table 2. The professional conduct of the teacher in the formation of pedagogical charisma: indicators, descriptors and training strategies

Training indicators	Performance descriptors	Training strategies for master's students
– Demonstrate enthusiasm and passion in teaching presentations	– Uses an enthusiastic tone and motivation-oriented language in simulated activities	– teaching short lessons with feedback on enthusiasm and expressiveness
– Apply tolerance and patience in conflict situations	– Remains calm and patient in conflict simulations; manages emotions and provides empathetic responses	– Seminars on conflict management and assertive communication; on emotional self-regulation
– Practice stress management strategies	– Can describe personal stress reduction techniques (breathing, planning)	– Resilience and well-being workshops for teachers (relaxation techniques, time-management)
– Practice assertive communication (setting appropriate boundaries)	– Clearly expresses needs and expectations in group exercises; gives and asks for constructive feedback	– Didactic case studies on delicate situations; development of authentic feedback and open communication exercises

In the first direction, the emphasis is on the expression of enthusiasm and passion in teaching. At the performance level, this materialises in master's students' ability to use an expressive tone and motivation-oriented language in simulated activities, and at the training level, it is supported by exercises for teaching short lessons, accompanied by feedback focused on enthusiasm and expressiveness.

A second dimension is the application of tolerance and patience in conflict situations. From a performance perspective, master's students demonstrate the ability to remain calm, manage their emotions and formulate empathetic responses in tense contexts, skills developed through seminars dedicated to conflict management, assertive communication and emotional self-regulation.

Next, stress management strategies are pursued as an integral part of professional conduct. At the performance level, master's students can describe and apply personal stress-reduction techniques, such as controlled breathing or activity planning, and, at the training level, these skills are reinforced through workshops focused on resilience and on maintaining well-being in an educational context.

The final direction is to practice assertive communication and establish appropriate boundaries in educational relationships. At the performance level, master's students clearly express their needs and expectations and provide or request constructive feedback in group exercises, these skills being developed through the analysis of sensitive teaching situations and through activities oriented towards open and authentic communication.

Component 3. Empathic Communicative Interactions and Fascination: Enthusiasm and Inspiration

This component emphasizes emotional communication skills and the teacher's ability to inspire students. The charismatic teacher actively listens to the students, showing empathy for their perspectives and emotions. Use elements of *fascination*, such as engaging storytelling, appropriate humor, and verbal enthusiasm, to engage students in the learning process. Empathy and passion are key features of pedagogical charisma; These are manifested by genuine care for students and the ability to enjoy their successes. The teacher's caloric and enthusiastic communication creates positive emotional patterns in the classroom and stimulates students' autonomy and intrinsic motivation.

Table 3. Empathic Communicative Interactions and the Motivational Dimension of Pedagogical Charisma: Indicators, Descriptors and Training Strategies

Training indicators	Performance descriptors	Training strategies for master's students
–Show empathy and active listening	– Renders in their own terms the perspective of colleagues/students in active listening exercises	–Non-violent communication workshop (role-learning, feedback on empathy)
–Expresses verbal and non-verbal enthusiasm	– Use expressive gestures and mimicry in presentations; maintains friendly eye contact	– Workshops on verbal and nonverbal expressiveness through narrative and dramatic techniques
–Use appropriate humor	– Include enjoyable examples in mock courses, maintaining content consistency	– Role-playing debates about the use of humor in teaching and its impact on students' attention
–Inspires personal development	– Encourages them to formulate learning objectives; provides constructive and motivating feedback	– Mentoring projects (case studies) in which students create personal development plans

In the foreground is the formation of the capacity for empathic relationships and active listening in educational communication. At the performance level, this is materialised in the ability of the master's students to reformulate, in their own words, the perspectives of colleagues or students within the communication exercises; at the training level, it is supported through non-violent communication workshops based on role-playing and empathy-oriented feedback.

Another axis of development is the cultivation of verbal and non-verbal enthusiasm as an expression of pedagogical charisma. From a performance perspective, master's students manifest expressiveness through gestures, mimicry and friendly eye contact in simulated

presentations, these skills being developed through formative activities focused on verbal and nonverbal expressiveness, using narrative and dramatic techniques.

Another level of training is the balanced and appropriate use of humor in the teaching context. At the performance level, master's students integrate pleasant examples and relaxing situations into simulated activities, without affecting the coherence of the content, and the formation of this skill is supported by role-playing debates on the role of humor in teaching and its influence on students' attention and involvement.

In addition to these dimensions, it aims to strengthen the motivational component of pedagogical charisma by stimulating personal development. From a performance perspective, master's students support the formulation of learning objectives and provide feedback with motivational valence; these skills are developed through mentoring projects and case studies focused on the development of personal development plans.

Component 4. Personality traits: emotional discipline, affective expressiveness, personal integrity

Pedagogical charisma largely reflects the teacher's personal traits. Emotional discipline requires the ability to self-regulate: the charismatic teacher controls his emotions in tense situations and acts calmly. Affective expressiveness involves the appropriate display of emotions (e.g., joy at students' success or seriousness in serious situations), avoiding extreme reactions. Personal integrity in the teaching context refers to honesty and consistency between shared values and concrete behavior; The teacher thus becomes a model of authenticity and consistency. These traits strengthen student confidence and group cohesion in the classroom.

Table 4. Personality traits relevant to pedagogical charisma: indicators, descriptors and training strategies

Training indicators	Performance descriptors	Training strategies for master's students
– Maintains professional integrity	– Admits and openly discusses personal mistakes; apply the same rules for all students	– Reflective diary on professional ethics situations; Case Study on Moral Dilemmas in Teaching
– Practice emotional control	– In simulated exercises, remain calm and objective in the face of challenges (aggressive student, disorder, etc.)	– Emotional self-control workshops (breathing techniques, mindfulness)
– Displays appropriate emotional expressiveness	– Uses various tones and appropriate facial expressions in communicating with students	– Diction and expressiveness exercises;
– Model values (honesty, responsibility)	– Demonstrates consistency between "what he says" and "what he does"; Earn respect through your own examples	– Mentoring on moral leadership; analysis of biographies of inspirational teachers

The first landmark of the formation of the pedagogical charism is professional integrity, as a personality trait that supports credibility and trust in the educational relationship. At the performance level, this is reflected in the ability of the master's students to recognize and openly discuss their own mistakes, as well as to apply unitary rules to all students, and at the training level, it is supported by the use of the reflective diary and by the analysis of situations of professional ethics and moral dilemmas encountered in teaching.

Another training direction aims to develop emotional control in demanding educational contexts. From a performance perspective, master's students demonstrate the ability to remain calm and objective in simulated exercises, even in the face of challenges such as aggressive behaviors or classroom disorder, these skills being developed through workshops dedicated to emotional self-control, which include breathing and mindfulness techniques.

Next, the development of adequate emotional expressiveness in communication with students is pursued. At the performance level, the master's students use various vocal tones and facial expressions appropriate to the educational situation, and at the training level these skills are reinforced through diction and expressiveness exercises, meant to optimize the impact of the didactic message.

In addition to these dimensions, training aims to assume the role of a model of values, such as honesty and responsibility. From a performance perspective, master's students show consistency between what they say and what they do, earning respect through their own example, skills developed through mentoring activities focused on moral leadership and through the analysis of biographies of professors considered inspirational.

Component 5. Positive climate stimulating motivation for learning

The result of the previous components is the creation of a positive educational climate that stimulates students' motivation and involvement. The charismatic teacher organizes class activities in such a way as to encourage active participation and autonomy of students. It creates an atmosphere based on trust and mutual respect, recognizing and valuing students' efforts. In the pedagogical literature it is shown that the involvement of the teacher in establishing a positive and motivating climate has significant favorable effects on the personal development of students. In practice, this translates into setting clear and fair rules, constant constructive feedback and encouraging collaboration in learning. Thus, students feel supported and motivated to take responsibility in the learning process, leading to improved academic and personal performance.

Table 5. Positive educational climate and stimulating motivation for learning: indicators, descriptors and training strategies

Training indicators	Performance descriptors	Training strategies for master's students
– Builds clear rules and class routines	–Applies transparent rules in simulations; get students involved in formulating common goals	– Workshops on classroom management (group dynamics, establishing learning norms)
– Communicates empathetically and provides constructive feedback	– Notice the positive reactions of the "students"; adapt the message to their emotional level	– Interactive methods focused on two-way communication
– Encourages cooperation and teamwork	– Plan learning and collaboration activities; Students report increased cohesion and motivation	– Group projects and learning through discovery that develop team spirit; Self-assessment
– Develops positive attitudes (trust, curiosity)	– Expresses their ideas and curiosities openly; show pleasure in the learning process	– Formative assessment and joint reflection on progress; Student-centered teaching models tailored to individual needs

In the first direction, the focus is on establishing clear class rules and routines that provide structure and predictability in the educational process. At the performance level, this is reflected in the ability of master's students to apply transparent rules in simulated contexts and to involve students in formulating common objectives, and at the training level it is supported through workshops dedicated to class management, focused on group dynamics and establishing learning norms.

A second dimension aims at empathetic communication and providing constructive feedback, as elements of a favorable educational climate. From a performance perspective, the master's students observe positive reactions from the "students" and adapt their messages to their emotional level, skills developed through interactive methods focused on two-way communication.

Next, the aim is to encourage cooperation and teamwork, as a way to stimulate motivation for learning. At the performance level, master's students plan collaborative learning activities, and participants report increased group cohesion and motivation, with these competencies reinforced through group projects and discovery-based learning, accompanied by self-assessment processes.

A final direction focuses on developing positive attitudes towards learning, such as confidence and curiosity. From a performance perspective, master's students openly express their ideas and interests and enjoy the learning process. At the formative level, these attitudes are supported by formative assessment, joint reflection on progress, and student-centred teaching models adapted to individual needs.

In conclusion, the charismatic teacher assumes the role of a value and professional landmark for students, acting as a mentor of personal and academic development, and through authentic educational relationships, he stimulates students to capitalize on their internal resources, to clarify their aspirations and to show responsibility for their own educational path. Coherent classroom management and efficient organization of educational activities contribute to creating a favorable climate for personal and academic development, supporting the formation of autonomy, motivation for learning and orientation towards long-term educational and professional success.

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