

STATE OF THE ART ON PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP AND ITS INFLUENCE ON THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

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Abstract

The approach to the school principal's leadership has been gaining importance since the early years of the 21st century, given that the school of this era faces challenges that require not only the attention of academic processes, but also school management from the planning, direction and evaluation of measures and strategies in the administrative, financial, directive and community areas in order to offer a quality education. The purpose of this document review is to analyze some recent research that has been developed as doctoral theses in the international context, and that deal with the way in which educational management and leadership styles can positively influence educational quality. For this purpose, a documentary review was carried out that allowed the identification of seven studies that complied with the thematic, geographical and temporal delimitation. As a result, it was found that knowledge of school management processes and the exercise of managerial, transformational and distributed leadership styles, among others, enable pedagogical leadership that provides educational quality, promotes innovation and improves the development of educational communities.

Keywords. Literature review, school management, leadership, leadership styles

INTRODUCTION

Schools, like all social organizations, have a specific mission around which principles and values are structured, the fulfillment of which implies the full execution of this mission; in this execution and in the staging of actions in the light of the aforementioned principles and values, the people appear, the human talent of the organization that, regardless of the denomination, must be suitable and have clarity about what must be done from their role. In this sense, some administrative difficulties arise to organize and reorganize educational programs that adapt to the increasingly diverse demands that learning represents today.

In addition to the learning problems affecting students, school leaders also face the task of being competent in the formulation of strategies to address the lack of commitment of educational communities, to promote work with the few resources, equipment and connectivity provided by educational authorities, the scarcity of competencies that should be developed in teachers through training in the use of resources and didactic tools mediated by new technologies and thus improve learning and raise student performance levels, for which the processes developed by the principal or rector must be improved through the exercise of a leadership style that improves educational management.

The identification of a state of the art on the principal's leadership and its influence on the quality of education offered in educational institutions is of utmost importance, since it allows understanding and analyzing in depth the impact that school leadership has on the educational process, providing a comprehensive view of the different leadership styles applied in the educational field in recent years, as well as their relationship and their contributions to the quality of learning, school climate, teacher motivation and student performance. In addition, an updated state of the art provides relevant information for political and administrative decision making in the educational field, allowing the identification of good practices, areas for improvement and trends in school leadership.

Likewise, the state of the art on this topic also contributes to the generation of academic knowledge and to the continuous training of principals and educational leaders, by providing

empirical evidence on the effects of leadership on educational quality. Likewise, it facilitates the identification of research gaps and areas that require more attention, thus promoting the development of more specific and relevant studies, which allows to start from an updated concept about the principal's leadership and its influence on the quality of education in Educational Institutions, for the structuring of research studies that contribute to the improvement of school management, strengthen the professional development of the teaching manager and promote more effective and equitable educational environments.

Educational leadership or leadership in the school environment, the central theme of this review, is commented by Sierra (2016), who states that one of the most important historical events in this type of leadership has occurred in the early years of the 21st century, because before, the figure of the leader was exercised by the rector or principal, who resorted to the general principles of leadership and highlighted some of the qualities and functions indicated in the manuals; However, the dynamics of the new century and the demands of the sector have caused the school to transform into an educational organization in which processes require other leaderships that contribute to improvement, since the difference between the principal and the leader is that the former only administers, while the latter, by focusing on changes, promotes innovation.

In this same theoretical perspective are the studies of Fullan (2002) and Spillane (2006), cited in Maureira, Moforte and González (2014), when they state that there is a marked difference between an administrator and a leader, although they point out that, for the case of a school organization, the best scenario is that it is led by a person who has both functions, since in this way tasks are distributed and this generates the dynamics of transformation that today's education demands. In conclusion, leadership was born with the first human organizations and in the school environment it has come to acquire some characteristics specific to the field of action.

It is essential to point out that the leader's capabilities and his functional and personal competencies mark his leadership style, which is reflected in the results achieved by the school in general, results that depend, as Bolívar (2010) states, on the improvements recorded in the learning of all students, the satisfaction of the staff and the motivation of the members of the community to participate in the achievement of common goals. In summary, these authors (Bolívar, 2010; Sierra, 2016; Maureira et al., 2014) agree that the principal's leadership must include clear and effective communication skills to motivate and empower those around him/her, skills to make informed and strategic decisions, empathy with team members, and ability to adapt to the changing challenges of the environment.

From a theoretical point of view, this review is based on some theories such as those of Wofford, Wodwin and Whittington (1998) and Eden and Leviathan (1975) regarding the characteristics that a leader must fulfill and what is expected of them, the attention of these researchers has focused on identifying the way in which leaders put the aforementioned characteristics at the service of innovation, given the abundant supply of technology currently available to them, which justifies the relevance of studying the different leadership styles exercised in schools and identifying which of them is the most appropriate to generate changes that represent higher quality (Fullan, 2014).

According to research such as that of Weng and Tang (2014), a strong and innovative leadership style, added to the knowledge and application of the principles of educational management and the use of technologies, favors an increase in the quality of administrative and academic processes. Meanwhile, in his exploratory studies, Bolívar (2010) gives an account of the central qualities of a leader, among which stands out the ability to influence others, which is consistent with transformational leadership styles involving a motivated team committed to goals (Horn, 2013) and distributed leadership as an inclination towards innovation for transformation (Fullan, 2014), which is why they are the most promoted in school organizations.

According to Robinson (2007, cited in Maureira et al., 2014), the reasons why these leaderships are considered appropriate for educational innovation lie in fulfilling what this author points out as necessary dimensions to improve learning, i.e., establishing goals and expectations and in the face of these responsibilities that everyone recognizes and abides by; spaces for dialogue between academic results and curriculum planning and implementation processes; facilitating the training

and self-training of teachers so that they develop pedagogical and technological competencies; and, the creation and maintenance of a pleasant and organized work climate that facilitates the establishment of healthy relationships among people.

METHODOLOGY

The main purpose of the documentary review process presented here is to analyze recent research on school management capacities and leadership styles that, according to these studies, significantly favor the improvement of student results, the quality of learning, the participation of community members and the attention to the needs of the environment, which represents the fulfillment of the school's goals. The process has been carried out from the perspective of Dulzaides and Molina Gómez (2004), who consider that the purpose of documentary research is to recover information of interest to the researcher from documents that have been produced by others.

To develop this type of research, searches are made in databases and certified journals to ensure that the knowledge produced has the endorsement of the scientific community. For this case, a search was conducted in databases such as Scielo, Dialnet, Google academic, scientific journals and repositories of universities with recognized trajectory in the training of doctors in the area of education, doctoral theses and theoretical articles of the last eight years, i.e., since 2015. Finally, the information is presented through a review of each of the studies that meet the selection criteria at the thematic level, i.e., leadership styles of the director, temporal (2015-2023) and, the geographical criterion, being the product of research studies for doctoral theses in the international context.

RESULTS

The studies presented, in accordance with the objective set out in this article, are the most outstanding doctoral theses that were found in the free databases and repositories of different universities in the international context, in which contributions can be found that were significant for the construction of an updated conception of school principals' leadership in the first decades of the 21st century, The leadership styles that they have been exercising to achieve results in the academic success of students and the characteristics that should be promoted in the exercise of school management to achieve educational quality in all administrative processes that support the pedagogical commitment of the training centers.

First, the study "Successful school leadership in Spain: A case study" presented by González (2015), who set out to identify the new ways in which school leadership has been exercised in recent years, for which he conducts a documentary review in which he finds concepts such as pedagogical leadership and school effectiveness, associated with different factors such as management experience, knowledge of the field of education and its complexity allow the exercise of the principal to overcome the challenges that the current era brings to educational centers, in addition, based on these factors, the author contributes the concept of transformational management to refer to the decisions that generate progress in the mission of the school.

A second study is that of Garay (2017), who with doctoral thesis "Leadership and achievements in school organizations in Chile" proposed to examine the relationship of the integral leadership model with the results of students in their performance, taking as a sample the school principals of the metropolitan region of Chile to whom a causal model was applied that allowed identifying that there are influential relationships in the effectiveness of leadership in relation to transactional and transformational types, since with its exercise, the results in the performance of students marked high effectiveness from an integral management.

Thirdly, the doctoral thesis presented by Almonacid (2017) "educational improvement practices of school leadership of subsidized educational establishments of high level of the commune of Puerto Montt" whose purpose was to recognize the school management practices that were given in basic education schools in the mentioned locality, evidencing as results that from the narratives of the participants it can be concluded that high performance centers employ managerial leadership and

management based on goals so that the whole team and collaborators present actions of continuous improvement in relation to these goals.

A fourth study referenced in the state of the art regarding principal leadership is the doctoral thesis of Serrano (2017) entitled "key competencies of school principals for effective leadership" with which he sought to identify the skills and principles that school principals must master to practice effective leadership, concluding, after the procedure, that the management and negotiating or charismatic leadership styles are not recommended because they produce insignificant results, while the author recommends the distributed and facilitating styles as the basis for practicing pedagogical leadership that translates into improved relations with other actors and the achievement of harmony in responsibilities.

Another relevant study in this exploration is the thesis of Quiroz (2019) which she titled "managerial leadership and its influence on the organizational climate in municipal schools of Concepción" and whose objective was to recognize the relationship between the exercise of administrative leadership and the organizational climate perceived in the schools of Concepción. After the quantitative procedures applied, the author concludes that both teachers and students emphasize that the principal should tend to innovation, communicating his goals to the other members of the community so that the organizational climate revolves around fluid communication and collaborative work.

In this same sense, she points out the work done by López (2021) in her doctoral thesis "leadership and school effectiveness in primary schools in the Basque Autonomous Community", in which she sought to account for the way in which school management was being carried out, finding as a result the need for leadership training in educational institutions to have a democratic management style that allows the distribution of tasks and communication of goals among teachers, students and parents to overcome the difficulties of the educational exercise and improve the quality of academic results.

Finally, reference is made to Lucena's doctoral thesis (2022), entitled "professional leadership identity in school leadership: Barriers, crisis and reconstruction", in which this author had the purpose of finding the factors that build and reconstruct the leadership identity among school principals and the image they project to their collaborators and the people who supervise them, for this, she conducted a study with sequential design that had three complementary phases whose results indicate that the leader must have good training and professional performance, associated with personal commitment to project his identity as a pedagogical leader who is concerned about improving his environment and is an example of dedication and social struggle.

DISCUSSION

For the realization of the state of the art for the foundation of the doctoral thesis "Design of a proposal on the leadership styles of the teacher manager through information and communication technologies in rural schools in the municipality of Cereté-Córdoba-Colombia", fifteen studies were examined, of which, In this article, the seven that made the most contributions with respect to the figure of the school principal and the characteristics and experiences that he/she should build for the exercise of an educational management based on the knowledge of the field of education as fundamental axes for them to be leaders who can contribute progress to the education offered in their institution were reviewed.

In this sense, the contribution of González (2015), through his study, focuses on the importance of having a principal with experience in educational management, since he/she understands the importance of establishing clear goals and objectives, as well as implementing effective strategies to achieve them, which is why a broad knowledge of the field of education is also required to employ techniques and instruments for collecting information that allow him/her to understand the unique needs and challenges of students, teachers and administrative staff in charge, so that he/she can point towards strategies that promote learning and growth of students.

In this same sense pointed the study of Garay (2017), who points out that it is useful in this sense the transactional leadership style, since this focuses on the exchange between the leader and his

collaborators, offering rewards for the fulfillment of tasks and correcting deviations, for this reason, it is required to combine this style with transformational leadership, to inspire and motivate the people in charge to foster a significant change in their way of thinking and acting, through the implementation of programs and policies that address the specific needs of the school community, thus promoting significant progress in the quality of education offered, as pointed out by González (2015).

According to Garay (2017), transactional leadership can provide structure and clarity, while transformational leadership can inspire greater commitment and performance. For its part, Almonacid's (2017) study concludes that the directive leadership style, which promotes goal-based management, allows the school principal to have a significant impact on student outcomes, as goals have been communicated to the work team in a clear way, as well as how each one can contribute to improve student outcomes in the school, which is similar to the distributed and facilitative leadership style proposed by Serrano (2017), since in combination with the directive style, pedagogical leadership can be practiced in schools.

A pedagogical leadership style, built from the application of other leadership styles, is also proposed by Quiroz (2019), who after his study concludes that a school leader is required to promote innovation in the educational field, as this is essential to adapt to changes in society and in the world of work, which prepares students to face future challenges. On the other hand, both López (2021) and Garay (2017), also highlight as a characteristic of pedagogical leadership the communication of goals to the work team, as this makes known the sense of direction and purpose in the educational community, which facilitates that all members of the institution can align and work together towards a common goal.

As a complement to the characteristics of a pedagogical leadership style, we can also cite some of the findings provided by Lucena (2022), when he points out for example that the importance of personal and professional commitment to society and the school by the school leader, as this allows solid relationships to be established with the community, creating an environment of trust and collaboration; furthermore, also when he refers to the fact that this commitment can positively influence the quality of education and the integral development of students. In these aspects, his findings are similar to those of López (2021) since he points out that all members of the school community should be allowed to have a voice in decisions, in order to foster a sense of responsibility and commitment to the educational process.

In summary, the state of the art, according to the research referenced as a result of the systematic literature review conducted, the school principal's leadership style contributes to improving the quality of academic results, among other issues, now, when this leadership style combines elements of transactional, transformational, directive and distributed styles, it manages to be democratic and pedagogical, which encourages the active participation of students, teachers and parents in decision making, promotes a collaborative learning environment and can lead to an increase in motivation, academic performance and overall satisfaction with the school by creating a positive school climate that has a positive impact on the emotional well-being of students and their willingness to learn.

CONCLUSIONS

The pedagogical leadership style for the 21st century is characterized by being inclusive, collaborative and focused on the integral development of students. This approach promotes active participation, critical thinking, creativity and adaptability, through innovation, thus contributing to improve the quality of academic results by promoting students' interest and motivation towards learning reflected in a greater commitment to school subjects and a stronger academic performance. In addition, this type of leadership fosters skills such as problem solving and teamwork, which are fundamental for academic success.

Also, by focusing on adaptability, pedagogical leadership prepares students to face academic and professional challenges in an ever-changing world. This comprehensive preparation can translate into significantly improved academic outcomes, as students are better equipped to meet

educational challenges. In short, pedagogical leadership contributes to improving the quality of academic outcomes by fostering students' motivation, engagement, foundational skills, and comprehensive preparation.

A pedagogical leadership style focused on the integral development of students contributes to the emotional well-being of students, as it provides them with tools to manage stress, academic pressure and emotional challenges, fostering resilience and self-confidence. Therefore, empathy and effective communication promoted by this leadership style help students feel heard and understood, which is fundamental for their mental and physical well-being.

The pedagogical leadership style contributes to teachers' attention to the needs of the environment by fostering empathy, collaboration and commitment to the community, as this leadership approach promotes teachers being attentive to the changing needs of students, families and the community in general, to create an inclusive environment focused on integral development, understanding the individual realities of their students and adapting their teaching methods to meet those needs, attention to cultural and social diversity, and fostering mutual respect in the classroom.

In addition, this leadership style can inspire teachers to seek opportunities to collaborate with other professionals, local organizations and community resources for the benefit of their students, which implies the establishment of extracurricular programs, participation in community projects and the development of alliances that enrich the educational experience of students, so that pedagogical leadership contributes to the creation of the necessary conditions in the school for the implementation of strategies to improve the environment, the relationships in the educational community, teamwork and motivation to achieve better results that account for quality education processes.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The authors express their gratitude to the Metropolitan University of Education Science and Technology, for give me the time and opportunity to participate in the development of these projects that have to do state of the art on principal leadership and its influence on the quality of education in educational institutions.

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