

Ventajas del liderazgo distribuido en instituciones de educación superior

Advantages of distributed leadership in institutions of higher education

Vantagens da liderança distribuída em instituições de ensino superior

Carlos Miguel Amador Ortíz

Instituto Tecnológico José Mario Molina Pasquel y Henríquez, Campus Puerto Vallarta, México

Carlos.amador@tecvallarta.edu.mx

Resumen

Se reflexiona sobre el tema de liderazgo en instituciones de educación superior con el fin de analizar propuestas teóricas congruentes con las características de estos centros educativos, el trabajo se llevó a cabo haciendo una investigación documental y analítica estableciendo un comparativo entre los aspectos conceptuales del liderazgo distribuido y de las características de las Instituciones de Educación Superior para poder identificar las ventajas de este tipo de liderazgo.

En cuanto a los resultados se encuentra que las características de las instituciones educativas conllevan una estructura organizacional diferente a las instituciones tradicionales; además, las instituciones de educación superior se caracterizan por poseer diferentes funcionalidades (docencia, vinculación, gestión, investigación), por tener personal altamente capacitado y por estar inmersas en un entorno extremadamente dinámico, con base en esto se concluye que la propuesta de liderazgo distribuido al democratizar la toma de decisiones conlleva una serie de ventajas para estas instituciones.

Palabras clave: Liderazgo, Educación Superior, Instituciones Educativas, Liderazgo Distribuido.

Abstract

The role of leadership in institutions of higher education was analyzed to determine the type of leadership proposal consistent with the characteristics of these institutions. This study was conducted by documentary and analytical investigation, which was used to compare the conceptual aspects of distributed leadership and the characteristics of institutions of higher education to evaluate the advantages of this type of leadership.

The results show that educational institutions have a different organizational structure from traditional institutions; moreover, higher education institutions have different functions (education, relations, management, research), which are performed by a highly trained staff working in an extremely dynamic environment. Based on these results, it is concluded that the proposal for distributed leadership, which democratizes decision making, produces a number of advantages for these institutions.

Keywords: Leadership, Higher Education, Educational Institutions, Distributed Leadership.

Resumo

O tema da liderança em instituições de ensino superior é analisado para analisar propostas teóricas consistentes com as características desses centros educacionais, o trabalho foi realizado através de uma pesquisa documental e analítica que estabelece uma comparação entre os aspectos conceituais da liderança distribuída e as características das Instituições de Ensino Superior, a fim de identificar as vantagens desse tipo de liderança.

Quanto aos resultados, verifica-se que as características das instituições educacionais implicam uma estrutura organizacional diferente das instituições tradicionais; Além disso, as instituições de ensino superior caracterizam-se por ter diferentes funcionalidades (ensino, vinculação, gestão, pesquisa), possuindo funcionários altamente capacitados e sendo imersos em um ambiente extremamente dinâmico, com base nisso, conclui-se que a proposta de liderança distribuída Ao democratizar a tomada de decisões, isso implica uma série de vantagens para essas instituições.

Palabras-chave: Liderança, Educação Superior, Instituições educacionais, Liderança Distribuída.

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Introduction

Leadership in educational institutions is conceived from different perspectives, the attributions from a formal and functional point of view of the role of the leader are assigned to the director, who in his management has as responsibilities the administration of resources, develop plans in relation to the objectives established by the education system, and also ensure quality in the training processes, which is the *raison d'être* of educational institutions (often the latter is the aspect in which less attention is given by managers).

This paper addresses the issue of leadership based on an analysis of the concept, which has been widely studied by the social sciences, particularly with the administrative approach because of the influence and importance it has for organizations, and also from a psychological and social perspective. social in order to determine the features of leadership, and explain the determinants and influence on social groups.

The importance of the role of the leader in the success of institutions is documented by the level of influence they can have on the organization and on social groups; However, most of the studies carried out on this topic are carried out in business structures that show notable differences in relation to schools or teaching centers, therefore, leadership is analyzed in the context of educational institutions and described Some studies in particular suggest leadership typologies in educational settings.

Finally, the pertinence of the theoretical model of distributed leadership for institutions of Higher Education is analyzed given the organizational and structural characteristics of the latter, and the dynamic context in which they are immersed and it is concluded by making a general reflection on the different topics discussed in this work.

Leadership in educational institutions

The studies carried out on the subject of leadership have had their greatest applications in the business world, where organizations generally follow a similar structure, but with some differences with respect to educational centers that have a more complex structure (Pareja, 2009). In the school context there are no bosses, or, at least, the relationship between them and the workers (especially the teachers) tends to be horizontal; the processes bring together a number of variables difficult to control, and the "context" can not always be approached in the same way (Bernal, cited in Pareja, 2009).

Therefore, the study of leadership in schools must take into account the particular context and characteristics of the organizational structure of these institutions, since even when Bolman and Deal (1995) mention that everywhere, leadership is considered as the solution for almost all organizational problems, so that the management of the leader is effective, this must be consistent with the type of organization that is directed.

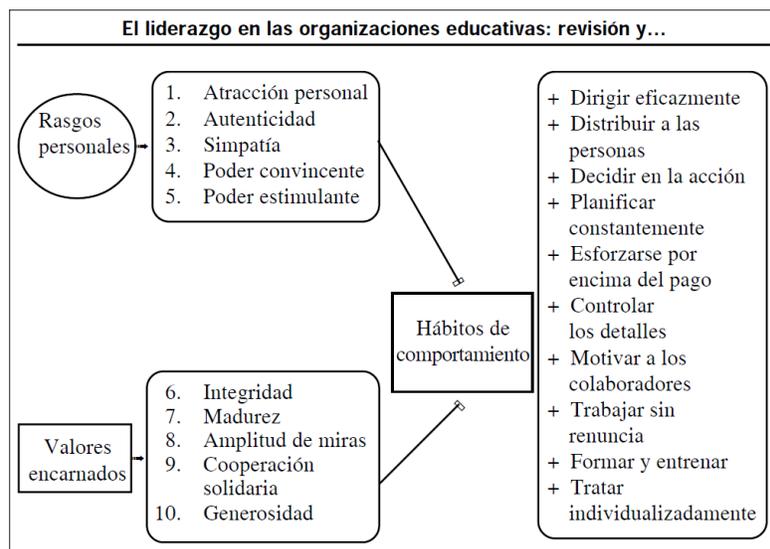
Leadership in the educational field puts a special emphasis on educational systems, in terms of their possibilities to generate the training processes expected in students, and with this to be able to fulfill the functions of educational institutions. In this way, leadership in educational institutions is directly linked to actions that can achieve educational improvement (Bolívar, López y Murillo, 2013).

Despite the vision that exists on the importance of leadership in institutions, and to which the success or failure of them is attributed, and even with the different studies from different areas of knowledge, there is no consensus among scholars of the subject as for the concept of leadership,

since some authors emphasize some particular characteristics about the visions that are held, or also the differences are found in the theoretical perspectives that influence the conceptualization.

Lorenzo (2005), considers three visions on which the subject is conceptualized: the first focuses on the qualities of the individual to explain leadership, and according to her, a leader is the person who has characteristics and qualities that others do not possess in some dimension of human activity. Under this approach Gento (1996) inspired by Senlle elaborates a description of the characteristics of a leader (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Características de un líder.



Fuente: (Gento, 1996).

Within this worldview of leadership, some studies were generated by authors such as Lewin, Lippitt and White (1939, cited in Murillo, 2006), which describe the behavior modes of the leaders in three categories:

-The authoritarian leadership. The leader concentrates all power and decision making. It is an exercise of unidirectional leadership, where followers obey the guidelines set by the leader.

-The democratic leadership. It is based on the collaboration and participation of all the members of the group.

-The leadership "laissez faire". The leader does not exercise his function, does not take responsibility for the group and leaves it to his own initiative.

Other interpretations have placed emphasis on the context, and according to these positions for each situation or problem can arise within a group the appropriate leader who can energize and generate cohesion in the group to meet a goal; These theories are known as environmental or contingency.

The most current positions seek to synthesize the vision of the theories focused on the qualities of the individual and the theories focused on the context, in this way the leadership is a phenomenon that hatches from certain features of the person that are suitable in function of that the situation is one or the other to energize a group, collective or concrete institution and not any other, in the construction of a shared project (Lorenzo, 2005). Within this conceptualization is made an integration of the individual, the context, the group and a project or mission.

Taking this as a reference Lorenzo (2005) mentions that leadership is conceptualized as:

- A function inherent to every group and, by extension, to every institution. That's why, more and more people talk about leadership and less about leadership.
- Consequently, and it is a really important and differential feature, it is a function of the group's heritage, not of a person and even less of a position in the organizational chart of a center.
- It is inserted in the culture. It is one of the values that constitute the culture of that organization.
- It is an exercise or activity that involves mastering processes of a triple nature: some are technical, interpretation and transformation.
- It is a function, also shared.
- It is exercised collegially and collaboratively.

According to Leithwood and Louis (2011), "the main functions that characterize the role played by a leader are to define the course to be followed and influence the group in order to achieve an objective; that is, to mark a common goal and influence others to share it "(Murillo, 2006). In turn, for Firestone and Riehl (2005) "leadership is considered as an activity characterized by mobilizing

and influencing others to develop shared understandings about the goals to be achieved" (Murillo, 2006).

It is also remarkable what Robinson (2011) mentions that the exercise of this influence is not based on force, coercion, or manipulation. For there to be leadership, the influence must come from the reasonable exercise of formal authority, from the leader's own qualities, or from his degree of knowledge and experience so as to be able to offer guidance to others.

Lorenzo (2005) it defines the leadership as the dynamizing function of a group or an organization to generate its own growth based on a shared mission or project; and mentions that there are four variables involved in the exercise of leadership: the leader or leaders of the group, the group of followers and the type of relationships they have with the leader, the situation or problematic context to overcome and a shared project as an answer or exit to this situation.

Being able to identify the variables that intervene in leadership allows us to describe the aspects that may affect the direction and results of a particular organization, in the educational areas as mentioned above, contextual differences are presented in relation to traditional organizations. that the followers and the relations of these with the group tend to horizontality, aspects that should be considered for the study and application of leadership in the education sector.

Regarding this, Bolivar, López and Murillo (2013), mention that the bureaucratic and managerial management of educational centers, inherited from modernity, needs to be redesigned with new structures capable of facing the most complex conditions in a more diverse world, that allow contextualized and local responses.

One of the objectives pursued when proposing a model or other management of schools is to achieve an improvement in educational quality (Bernal and Ibarrola, 2015); However, schools currently demand new models of management and leadership in institutions, which are more relevant to the needs and characteristics of educational centers and current teaching institutions, so

that a course can be taken these organizations where the orientation of actions is directed towards learning and training with equity and quality.

Typologies of leadership in educational institutions.

The interest in transferring leadership studies carried out in the business world to educational centers began to develop strongly and more autonomously from the 1960s and 1970s, with general research on leadership (Murillo, 2006).

After these dates begin to develop studies that propose leadership typologies contextualized to the education sector. Among these proposals, Sergiovanni (1984) proposes leadership styles based on a predominant trait or orientation:

1. The technical leader, who specializes in planning techniques, setting goals about goals and times, and focuses on organizational structures.
2. The managerial leader, who is in charge of planning, organizing, coordinating and establishing the schedules of school activities with a focus on efficiency and optimization.
3. The human leader, characterized by placing emphasis on human relationships. This leader motivates, supports the group and offers development opportunities to group members. Leadership is carried out through participatory decision making.
4. The educational leader, who has extensive knowledge of the educational field, as well as experience in teaching and school management, and is involved in the diagnosis of educational problems, provides guidance to teachers, monitors the monitoring of academic activities , to the evaluation and professionalization of teachers, and also worries about the development of the curriculum.
5. The symbolic leader is characterized by assuming a more directive role, establishing the priorities and the direction to follow, constantly supervising the different areas of the teaching center, prioritizing the educational aspects of management, presiding over the different academic and social events that take place. present and try to show a unified vision of the teaching center in each of the events in which it participates so that it leads to commitment to those who work in the organization.
6. The cultural leader, who places emphasis on strengthening the values, beliefs and cultural roots that give the school its unique identity. It tends to create an organizational style in which a proper and differentiated school culture is defined. The cultural leader carries out the following activities: define

the culture of the school, disseminate the culture of the school, tell stories and maintain myths, traditions and beliefs, explain the operation of the center, develop and manifest a system of symbols throughout of time, and reward those who adopt this culture.

Another proposed typology of leadership in the school environment is that elaborated by Leithwood, Begley and Cousins (1990) in which four types of leadership are established:

-The style of leadership A with the emphasis on interpersonal relationships, the establishment of a climate of cooperation within the school and a collaborative relationship between community groups and central authorities oriented towards efficiency. Managers under this type of leadership establish interpersonal relationships as critical points for success in their management, and perform a management directed towards tasks to achieve the objectives.

-The leadership style B focuses on the performance of students and improve their conditions and their well-being, for which they adopt characteristics of some leadership styles such as interpersonal, administrative and managerial.

-The style of leadership C focuses on educational programs, seek the efficiency of programs and improve the skills of teaching staff, their actions are aimed at developing procedures for the successful completion of educational programs.

-D style is characterized by dedicating itself almost exclusively to administrative aspects. Their focuses of attention are aspects such as schedules, budgets, payroll, and not much time is devoted to pedagogical aspects except when they are of extreme importance for the institution.

After these studies on leadership in the school environment were made, an important advance was made by the school effectiveness research movement, and in the 1980s the term instructional leadership was coined, having a strong impact on school management, and defining the aspects that contribute to an integral development of the students (Murillo, 2006):

- Contribute to the establishment of the mission and school goals
- Help to generate a positive learning climate
- Help and support the professional development of teachers
- Develop, coordinate and supervise the center's curriculum.
- To encourage teamwork among teachers.

- Favor the participation of the school community.
- Have high expectations towards teachers and communicate them.
- Contribute to generate a culture of evaluation for improvement between teachers and the center.

Subsequent studies on the subject criticized the position of instructional leadership, because although it represented a radical change between the traditional bureaucratic postures derived from the administration and a proposal focused on the aspects of the most pertinent teaching with the educational institutions, the educational field demanded new management models that not only describe the aspects that affect good leadership management in schools, but have the capacity to transform them to improve education, in this way new positions emerge such as transformational leadership, leadership facilitator, persuasive leadership, sustainable leadership and more recently distributed leadership.

Methodology

This work corresponds to a documentary and analytical study, with a qualitative approach, and was carried out through the following phases:

Phase 1. A documentary research was made on the different leadership proposals applied to educational institutions.

Phase 2. A description of higher education institutions was made regarding their structure.

Phase 3. An analysis was made to compare the characteristics of the distributed leadership proposal with the structure of higher education institutions.

Phase 4. The advantages of distributed leadership for higher education institutions are reflected and concluded.

Leadership distributed as a proposal for school management in higher education institutions.

Higher education institutions, unlike the other educational levels, are also concerned with training aspects (a task common to all levels of education), for the generation and validation of scientific knowledge as a good to solve problems, to teach, and to develop technology that generates wealth and development. Due to the contextual conditions of constant generation of technologies, a predominant economic model of free market, economic interdependence between countries and high competitiveness in productive sectors, among others, universities are immersed in an extremely dynamic environment.

In addition to this external context, the organizational structure of the universities is complex because it is made up of a diverse school community with highly qualified personnel in different areas of knowledge, and with functions besides teaching, school management, links with the environment, tutorials and research and technological development.

Derived from this, it is understandable that the bureaucratic management models transferred from the administrative sciences without adequate contextualization to educational institutions are not able to respond to the demands that higher education institutions currently have. Furthermore, in the theoretical aspect, leadership studies have gone from a vision focused on personal traits to managing and solving school problems to a definition that is more linked to the ability to combine wills based on a shared common project, in empathy with the new situations that arise, in the ability to adapt the functioning of the school to the objectives that are set and in the ability to understand the culture of the school and promote and lead change, among others (Cayulef, 2007).

From this arise new models that suppose a congruent answer to the demands of the educational institutions at present (particularly the Institutions of Superior Education); One of these proposals is that of distributed leadership, based on an approach to share leadership with the school community, involving all members in the operation and in the results.

In an educational community characterized by academics specialized in different areas of knowledge and with diverse complex functions, coupled with an extremely dynamic context, distributed leadership in which the skills of others are taken advantage of in a common cause, and in which leadership manifests itself at all levels (Harris and Chapman, 2002), it is seen as a congruent and pertinent option for the management of Higher Education Institutions.

This management model involves changing the role of the director from being a bureaucratic manager to an agent of change that can dynamize the capacities of the members of the community to achieve a common goal, by distributing the exercise of leadership and the ability to take of decisions and problem solving in a more democratic way.

In this leadership model, managers facilitate and promote professional development, creating a shared vision of the school, which means breaking with the isolation and individualism of teaching practices, supporting the community to move around this vision (Crawford, 2005). Therefore, distributed leadership makes it easier for everyone to perform the work more efficiently and prominently; with it, individuals already highlighted are strengthened (Murillo, 2006).

The director under the approach of distributed leadership has as one of his tasks to develop and promote the own leadership capacity in the members of the school community based on a shared mission, personal development is stimulated and with this the motivation is impacted, aspect that in a Higher Education Institution allows the exercise of leadership in academic areas in which the decision making, the coordination of work teams and the support of the school community are important.

The relevant aspect of this proposal is the use of human resources available to institutions according to their different skills and talents, as well as the stimulation to develop the skills that can contribute to improving the quality of the organization, and the decisions coordinated and jointly by the members of the school community; The latter is particularly important in a higher education institution because of the degree of specialization of some members of the academic community and the contributions they can make in their areas of work.

Conclusions

The academic review identifies the leadership of educational organizations as one of the main variables that affect better performance of establishments and the system in general (OECD, 2008); However, the context of educational institutions is characterized by important differences in aspects of their organizational structure and the interactions that are generated between individuals compared to traditional organizations, therefore, leadership studies and their applications must be congruent with the dynamics that are lived in educational institutions.

In this sense, leadership studies carried out with educational centers as a center of study tend to be more consistent with the understanding of the aspects that affect the results and the objectives that are to be achieved.

On the other hand, leadership studies have evolved due to the fact that a greater understanding of the aspects that have influence in the exercise of leadership has been generated, and also the demands for institutions are increasing, and in this way it has gone from an understanding of leadership based on the traits that define a leader to the description of new scenarios that allow identifying a group with a common goal and democratizing leadership in different areas of an organization to involve different members in the results of the group.

The Institutions of Higher Education present substantial differences in relation to educational institutions of other levels, a high degree of specialization of the academic staff, an orientation to the training of professionals of diverse areas, development of teaching activities, linkage, research and technological development and, in addition to this, they are immersed in a dynamic context that requires adaptation to the changes that occur in international and local environments.

Therefore, a proposal such as distributed leadership in which the leader shares the responsibility of the management with the different areas democratizing the participation of community members in the decision making and promoting a shared vision of goals and objectives, is presented as a management model congruent with the organizational structure of Higher Education Institutions, and with the demands that are demanded from these organizations, since it allows them to adapt

more easily to the constant changes derived from the dynamic environment in which they are immersed.

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