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Leadership: its importance in the management of school coexistence

Sara Conde Vélez*, M^a Carmen Azaustre Lorenzo & Juan Manuel Méndez Garrido

Department of Education, University of Huelva, Av. Tres de Marzo S/N, Huelva 21071, Spain

Abstract

This paper discusses educational leadership in the management of school coexistence. To this end, we examined a series of variables that may be included in a committed and transforming leadership model that encourages a positive climate of coexistence. A survey type methodology was followed. The sample included 46 secondary schools in Andalusia integrated in the network «School: Space for Peace», taking 46 teachers and 46 families as interviewees. The main conclusion reached with the model proposed in this research shows that a leadership committed to a culture of peace exerts a degree of influence over the management of school coexistence and the promotion of preventive measures.

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Keywords: School coexistence; leadership; management of coexistence; culture of peace; issue of coexistence; contrary behaviour

1. Introduction

The scientific community acknowledges that managing coexistence in schools is a complex multidimensional and global process (Suárez, Roldá, & Calvo-Mora, 2014). In this regard, we can identify works focused on the study of specific factors with a direct influence on coexistence. As an example, the studies by Álvarez, Del Río, Vila, & Praiz (2014), demonstrate the positive correlation of leadership (factor afforded relevance through studies such as Campo, & Grisaleña, 2011) with other factors such as resources management, programming... and other variables that favour a positive climate of coexistence. Contributions such as those of Tuvilla (2013) highlight the sense of community, showing the influence of teacher motivation on educational leadership and management style. The literature identifies leadership as one of the critical success factors that must be assumed by those responsible for improvement of schools

* Corresponding author. Tel.: 959219239;
E-mail address: sara.conde@dedu.uhu.es

and their programmes. This calls for competent management, which involves clarity in decision-making and coherence in order to adopt the most valuable actions to encourage transformation of the centres and the development of projects for improvement (Bolívar 2010; Muñoz & Marfán, 2011). Development of the improvement initiatives applied in schools depends on the coordination capacity and motivational style of the leader, so that the programme can be executed under the auspices of a culture and climate of collaboration, where everyone can see themselves as active members and creators of meaning in the educational community. This task is the basis of leadership management, achieving the commitment of other organisations, entrepreneurs and administrations to be incorporated as stewards sharing responsibility for these innovative practices ((Bernal & Ibarrola, 2015; Sans-Martín, Guàrdia, & Triadó-Ivern, 2016). When studying the relationship between leadership and school climate, analysing the activities of the principals leading the centres helps to discover, according to Tirado & Conde (2016), the ‘organisational style’ that the leader hopes to help create. And if this were the case, one might think that not only do the school leaders hold their own beliefs on the type of organisation they lead, but also that these beliefs might constitute a significant influence on the atmosphere and climate that develops in the institution. In short, while acknowledging the differences between the different types of leadership, we must also recognise the importance of maintaining a degree of impetus in order to harness their influence on the climate of schools. As noted by Murillo & Hernández-Castilla (2015), it is the leaders who shall clearly and significantly determine how receptive the organisation is to alternative interpretations and proposals for change.

2. Study aims and hypotheses

The general aim of this research consists of analysing the importance of educational leadership in the management of school coexistence. The specific objectives proposed are as follows:

- To validate the construct of interplay of factors associated with a leadership committed to the culture of peace.
- To confirm the influence of leadership in demonstrating its commitment to the peace culture in management of school coexistence and promotion of preventive measures.
- To confirm the influence the management of school coexistence has on the promotion of preventive measures.
- To find out to what extent the management influences a reduction in contrary behaviours.

The theoretical model subjected to empirical testing is presented below (see figure 1):

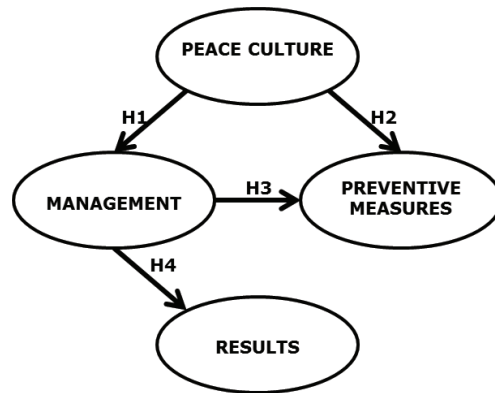


Fig.1. Hypotheses tested

Following the model proposed, the hypotheses put forward are:

- Hypothesis 1 (H1): Leadership that demonstrates its commitment to peace culture directly influences coexistence management.

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