ANALYSIS OF THE INCIDENCE OF DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP ON THE SENSE OF BELONGING AND TEACHER COMMITMENT IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF GOOD PRACTICES

ANÁLISIS DE LA INCIDENCIA DEL LIDERAZGO DISTRIBUIDO SOBRE EL SENTIDO DE PERTENENCIA Y COMPROMISO DOCENTE EN EL ESTABLECIMIENTO DE BUENAS PRÁCTICAS

Denisse Apotheloz

Fundación Universitaria Iberoamericana, México

(dapotheloz@gmail.com) (https://orcid.org/0009-0004-8113-180X)

Inmaculada García Martínez

Universidad de Granada, Spain

(igmartinez@ugr.es) (https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2620-5779)

	ABSTRACT
Keywords: distributed leadership, commitment, professional learning, belonging.	The purpose of this study is to evaluate the influence of distributed leadership on teacher professionalization and the implementation of "good practices". The literature highlights the importance of distributed leadership in the current educational context, recognizing and valuing different roles within a team. The target population of this research is teachers of the Elbio Fernández Educational Center in Montevideo, Uruguay, which has a total of 300 teachers. The methodology employed follows a sequential explanatory mixed design. The quantitative phase uses a questionnaire to analyze leadership patterns, with a sample of 170 teachers. The qualitative phase includes interviews with 14 teachers to deepen responses and explore the sense of belonging and commitment of the participants. The results indicate that leadership in Elbio Fernandez is distributed, with emphasis on direction and coordination. A positive relationship is established between distributed leadership, sense of belonging, teacher commitment and professionalization. In summary, this study provides valuable information on the interrelationship between distributed leadership, teacher commitment and professionalization, contributing to improve educational management and teacher development for educational success. With the results of this study, it is hoped that educational centers can continue prioritizing distributed leadership models that enable teacher professionalization and the establishment of best practices.

	RESUMEN
	Este estudio tiene como objetivo evaluar la influencia del liderazgo distribuido en la profesionalización docente y la implementación

Palabras clave:
liderazgo distribuido, compromiso, aprendizaje profesional, pertenencia.

de "buenas prácticas". Se destaca en la literatura la importancia del liderazgo distribuido en el contexto educativo actual, reconociendo y valorando diferentes roles dentro de un equipo. La población a la que va dirigida esta investigación es el cuerpo docente de la Escuela y Liceo Elbio Fernández de Montevideo, Uruguay, que cuenta con un total de 300 integrantes. La metodología empleada sigue un diseño mixto explicativo secuencial. La fase cuantitativa utiliza un cuestionario para analizar patrones de liderazgo, con una muestra de 170 docentes. La fase cualitativa incluye entrevistas a 14 docentes para profundizar en respuestas y explorar el sentido de pertenencia y compromiso de los participantes. Los resultados indican que el liderazgo en Elbio Fernández es distribuido, con énfasis en la dirección y coordinación. Se establece una relación positiva entre el liderazgo distribuido, el sentido de pertenencia, el compromiso docente y la profesionalización. En resumen, este estudio aporta valiosa información sobre la interrelación entre liderazgo distribuido, compromiso docente y profesionalización, contribuyendo a mejorar la gestión educativa y el desarrollo de los docentes para el éxito educativo. Con los resultados de este estudio, se aspira a que los centros educativos puedan continuar priorizando modelos de liderazgo distribuidos que habiliten la profesionalización docente y el establecimiento de buenas prácticas.

Introduction

Distributed leadership, according to Gronn (2002) is a collaborative approach that recognizes that leadership does not reside exclusively in one person, but emerges and is shared among various individuals according to their skills and the context, fostering collective practices, flexibility in roles and a culture of participation and organizational innovation. Contemporary literature highlights the importance of adopting a distributed leadership model to address current educational challenges, as they go beyond the capacity of an individual leader (Harris, 2014). Authors such as Leithwood et al. (2009) and Harris and Spillane (2008) explain that distributed leadership emerges as a response to external demands faced by schools, leading them to restructure their leadership teams. This approach proposes a collective leadership experience, focusing on interactions rather than actions, recognizing the contribution of all team members (Chatwani, 2018; Hartley, 2023).

Current research highlights the impact of formal and informal leaders on educational improvement processes, with direct and indirect influences on the teaching task and interaction with students (Bektaş et al., 2022; Liu et al., 2021). García-Martínez et al., 2021 advocate the importance of interaction between leaders and faculty, as this relationship favors school improvement and fosters greater commitment and collaboration among teachers.

Given the relevance of management teams in educational quality, this study focuses on analyzing how the promotion of distributed leadership favors the development of good teaching practices, as well as the sense of belonging and commitment to the educational institution. It is recognized that the active participation of teachers is essential for the effective implementation of changes and innovations, contributing to the enthusiasm and commitment to institutional projects.

This has been addressed in contemporary literature, Hardhienata (2019) pointing out in his study some factors to strengthen teaching commitment, such as a close relationship in the team, performance monitoring, care to physical and emotional state and belonging to the organization. Also, the ability to build teams and generate a collaborative spirit and the promotion of positive interpersonal relationships among staff (Olanrewaju and Okorie, 2019). Therefore, the interest of the research lies in studying teacher commitment in order to promote practices that enrich teacher professionalization and improve student learning. It seeks to understand the impact of distributed leadership on teacher engagement, promoting collaboration and professionalization of practices (Thien and Adams, 2021).

To this end, the role of leadership is emphasized to ensure the necessary conditions and create periodic collaborative work spaces (Szczesiul, 2014; Szczesiul and Huizenga, 2014), as well as facilitate access to resources that foster teacher learning.

On this aspect, Krichesky and Murillo (2018) point out that the absence of institutional structures for joint reflection on practice is demotivating for faculty, making the creation of such opportunities by leadership essential. Also, that the possibility of exchange provides the resources to learn about practice, encouraging reflection and dialogue.

Pedraza et al. (2010) in their study make visible the relationship between several factors, pointing out that job stability has an impact on the employee's tranquility, motivation and emotionality, showing a greater disposition towards the organization's objectives.

Similarly, Herrera (2012) concludes in his study that both a sense of belonging and job stability are essential for the proper functioning of an organization. In this line, Kachchhap and Horo (2021) account for the positive influence of support and organizational climate on teachers' sense of belonging, being able to experience a collegial atmosphere in which a unified goal is achieved. Together, in the study proposed by Pesonen et al. (2019) it is evident that the sense of belonging is built through joint practices and shared tasks, efforts in the professional relationship between teachers, and reflecting and sharing one's own pedagogical thinking.

Benawa et al (2017) also list within the factors, motivating teachers to innovate and obtain the best results from work, encouraging teamwork, attending to the psychological aspect of teachers (stress levels, depression), and improving confidence, clarifying and reinforcing assigned tasks, encouraging the development of cohesion as a team of teachers, creating effective communication and supporting the good ideas of each teacher.

Considering the above, the problem statement and research questions focus on the impact of distributed leadership on teacher professionalization, considering resistance and factors that may hinder its full implementation. The need to actively involve teachers in the promotion of joint work initiatives and common goals is emphasized, overcoming resistance and conditions that may limit their participation.

At the level of convenience and practical implication, this study aims to generate a greater professionalization of the faculty, connected to a sense of belonging and commitment to the institution. From a social and scientific perspective, it is hoped that this study will inspire other schools to adapt their management teams, based on evidence of the positive impacts of distributed leadership.

Based on the foregoing, the present study is based on a general research objective, which is further developed into five specific objectives.

Thus, the general objective focuses on identifying the impact of distributed leadership on teacher professionalization, their sense of belonging to the institution and their degree of commitment.

Specific objectives:
1. Know the leadership modality that prevails in Elbio Fernández.
2. Examine the trend on teachers' sense of belonging.
3. Identify the level of commitment of the participants.
4. Analyze the impact of leadership modalities on teacher commitment and involvement.
5. Reflect on how distributed leadership and teacher empowerment influence teacher professionalization.

Method

Design

In this study, the type of mixed design is sequential explanatory (Creswell, 2017). As explained by Pérez Peña et al. (2023), this type of study facilitates a deeper and more detailed understanding of complex research problems. Bagur-Pons et al. (2021) point out that this type of design has contributed to understanding the dynamism of educational phenomena. The first stage of this study was the quantitative phase, in which the data derived from the Distributed Lidership Inventory questionnaire, validated in Spanish by García-Martínez et al. (2020), originally developed by Hulpia (2009) (Table 2). The

purpose of this part was to diagnose the forms of leadership present in the selected population. In a second stage, emphasis was placed on issues requiring further in-depth analysis. For this purpose, qualitative analysis was used to examine the findings obtained in the interviews, with the intention of learning about the faculty's perceptions of their sense of belonging, institutional commitment, as well as other factors that may limit their professional growth.

Following Hernández-Sampieri et. al. (2017), the following stages of the sequential explanatory design were developed: quantitative data collection, quantitative data analysis, qualitative data collection, qualitative data analysis, interpretation, and total analysis.

Sample

The context of the research is Montevideo, Uruguay, with a population of 3,286,314 inhabitants and an educational structure that includes public and private schools. The study is conducted at the Elbio Fernandez School and Lyceum, a private institution with 1600 students that stands out for its bilingual, secular, humanistic and innovative approach. The institution has more than 155 years of history and has been a pioneer in school reform in Uruguay, maintaining an innovative profile and adapting to the demands of today's society. In this educational institution there is some mobility in the faculty, with a percentage that varies between 12.7% and 27.8%. This mobility poses challenges for the continuity of institutional projects and will be analyzed in relation to teaching commitment and sense of belonging.

This research focused on the teaching staff of the Elbio Fernández School and Lyceum in Montevideo, Uruguay, with a total population of 300 teachers. The quantitative sample included 170 teachers. Stratified random sampling was used to calculate the sample of participants. The formula used considered the size of the universe, confidence level, proportion of the variable, variance and sampling error.

From the analysis of responses to the questionnaire, key characteristics of the representative sample were identified. In terms of gender, diversity was observed, with 14.7% of men and 85.3% of women, reflecting the gender distribution in the institution. The age variable revealed a concentration in the 31-40 age range, while the experience variable highlighted a prevalence of permanent contracts (70.6%) before temporary contracts and teachers with 11-20 years of experience (30%).

In the qualitative part, in-depth interviews were conducted with 14 teachers, in line with the qualitative methodology. For the selection of the interviews, a convenience sampling was carried out, following the specific needs of the study.

The characterization of the participants showed that 85.6% were women, the average age was 43 years, with teaching experience ranging from 7 to 41 years, and length of service between 1.5 and 27 years. Regarding the type of contract, 63% have definitive contracts, in line with the quantitative findings.

Instruments

For the quantitative phase, the Distributed Leadership Inventory questionnaire was used, validated in Spanish by García-Martínez et al. (2020), originally developed by Hulpia (2009). Adaptations were made to adjust it to the Uruguayan context considering the most common leadership figures in the country. The questionnaire consists of 52 items that address various dimensions of leadership: Management Leadership (items 1-13), Coordination Leadership (items 14-25), Center Performance (26-43), Job Satisfaction (44-48, 51) and Leadership Identity (49,50)

The validity and reliability of the instrument were evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha, obtaining a coefficient of 0.974 indicating excellent reliability.

Table 1
Reliability statistics

Cronbach's alpha	N of elements
,974	52

The collection of responses was carried out by means of an online form built in Google Forms, facilitating the anonymous and dynamic participation of the subjects. The 5-point Likert scale represented total disagreement to total agreement.

For the qualitative phase, regarding the design of the qualitative interviews, a script was developed considering the research objectives and the relevant literature. The thematic cores were identified and a single battery of questions was designed for all participants.

Responses were categorized, resulting in key dimensions. The following table details the main categories and the questions associated with them.

Table 2
Main categories and associated questions

MAIN CATEGORIES	QUESTIONS
SENSE OF BELONGING	Do you feel comfortable at the center? Do you feel that your teaching performance is in line with what is promoted by the center? Why?
TEACHING COMMITMENT	Do you feel committed to the institution? In what examples do you observe this? What factors do you think influence this commitment and sense of belonging to the center?
LEADERSHIP STYLE	How do you think the leadership modality impacts your engagement with the center? Do you feel that the leadership modality empowers your task and promotes your teaching professionalization? In what examples do you identify it?
TEACHER PROFESSIONALIZATION AND BEST PRACTICES	Do you consider that the leadership modality in your center favors the establishment of good practices? What are your experiences in this regard?

Data Analysis

After data collection, analysis proceeded in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki (World Medical Association, 2013) guaranteeing the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants. The analysis consisted of the following stages: quantitative data collection, quantitative data analysis, qualitative data collection, qualitative data analysis, interpretation and total analysis (Sampieri, 2017).

In the quantitative phase, the DLI questionnaire was used for descriptive, correlational and factorial analyses with SPSS 24 software. Frequencies, means, standard deviations, contingency tables, Pearson's Chi-square were used to describe variables and comparative investigations.

The qualitative analysis was carried out by means of content analysis, using the coding technique to extract relevant aspects, establish relationships and build concepts, models and theories with an interpretative approach.

Subsequently, the data were visualized through diagrams using Atlas.t software as a processing aid.
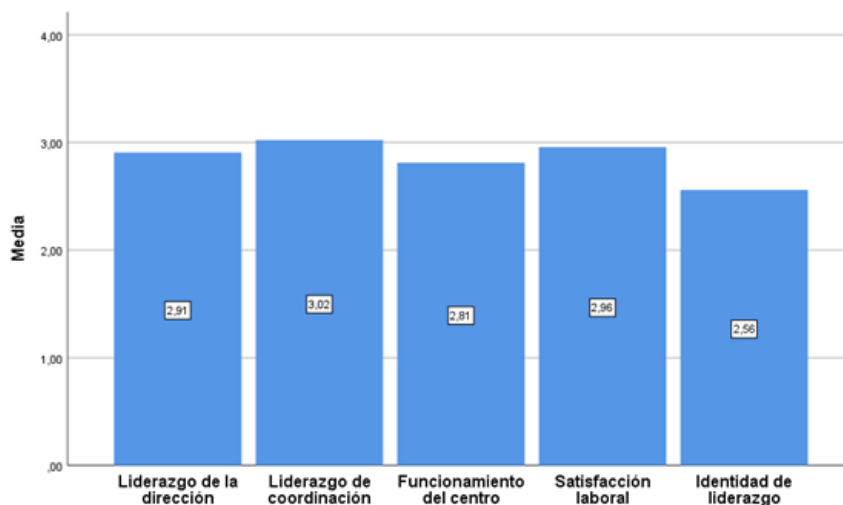
Results

Quantitative Phase

According to the groupings of the DLI questionnaire, using exploratory factor analysis, the following dimensions were obtained: management leadership, coordination leadership, center functioning, job satisfaction and leadership identity, as shown in the following table.

The following image shows the comparison of the means of each dimension.

Figure 1
Average of the different dimensions

According to the results obtained in the questionnaire (Table 2), the analysis of each of the dimensions is presented.

Table 3
Questionnaire results

QUESTIONNAIRE ITEMS	Media	Deviation
1. establishes a vision for the center that is reflected in the Management Project?	2,96	,76
2. reflects, through dialogue with staff, on the vision of the center?	2,98	,91
3. favors opportunities for teachers to improve their professional skills?	2,94	,99
4. offers support to teachers in their professional performance?	2,85	,93
5. explain your reasons for questioning, at times, the work or certain actions of teachers?	2,83	,90
6. are you available after class to assist teachers when they need help?	2,91	,99
7. seeks the personal well-being of teachers?	2,98	1,01
8. encourage me to grow professionally?	2,96	1,00
9. encourages me to innovate my teaching practices?	3,01	,94
10. ensure that teachers have the "time and space" to interact professionally?	2,87	1,15
11. evaluate staff performance?	3,08	,86
12. participates in the evaluation of the teaching and learning process of the faculty?	2,78	,99
13. participates in the formative evaluation of teachers?	2,63	1,02
14. establishes a vision for the center that is reflected in the Management Project?	2,94	,81
15. reflects, through dialogue with staff, on the vision of the center?	3,02	,87
16. offers support to teachers in their professional performance?	3,03	,92
17. explain your reasons for questioning, at times, the work or certain actions of teachers?	2,99	,91
18. are you available after class to assist teachers when they need help?	3,05	,96
19. seeks the personal well-being of teachers?	3,10	,91
20. encourage me to grow professionally?	3,04	,91
21. encourages me to innovate my teaching practices?	3,08	,94
22. ensure that teachers have the "time and space" to interact professionally?	2,99	1,04
23. evaluate staff performance?	3,10	,89
24. participates in the evaluation of the teaching and learning process of the faculty?	3,02	,94
25. participates in the formative evaluation of teachers?	2,89	1,00
26. Our center has an effective management team.	3,15	,83
27. The management team manages the center efficiently.	3,12	,82
28. The management team supports the goals I would like to achieve in our center.	2,92	,85
29. All members of the management team are equally involved in the achievement of the center's central objectives.	2,88	1,02
30. In our center, each teacher occupies the role that belongs to him/her, taking into account his/her competencies.	2,75	,98
31. The members of the management team distribute their time equally.	2,64	,93
32. The members of the management team are clear about the school's objectives.	3,27	,82
33. The management team assumes the responsibilities linked to its position.	3,37	,80
34. The management team shows willingness to innovate.	3,31	,80
35. The functions of the management team are defined.	2,99	,93
36. Coordination and supervision of tasks and responsibilities among the staff is a form of leadership that allows the school's goals to be achieved.	3,00	,85
37. Leadership is shared among the staff.	2,62	1,05
38. As a teacher I feel that I am allowed to participate in the center's decision making.	2,16	1,20
39. As a teacher, I consider that I participate in the center's decision making.	1,92	1,17
40. There is a coordination structure that makes decision making effective.	2,57	1,06
41. Functional communication between personnel is facilitated.	2,63	,98
42. There is an optimal level of autonomy in decision making.	2,32	,97
43. My center motivates me to develop my teaching skills.	2,99	,95
44. I am proud to be part of the team at this center.	3,27	,89
45. I am really concerned about the fate of our center.	2,34	1,48
46. I find that my values and the values of this center are similar.	2,87	,99
47. I often talk to my friends about how delighted I am to work at this center.	2,60	1,11
48. I am glad I chose this center to work at.	3,20	,91
49. To what extent do I consider my job as a lead teacher?	2,47	,99
50. I like to play my leadership role.	2,65	1,10
51. I want to continue my professional role at this center.	3,47	,89
52. If I could choose again, I would change my job for another profession.	,83	1,23

In the "Management Leadership" dimension, the results indicate a marked tendency towards "agree". The items "encourages me to innovate", "evaluates staff performance", "seeks the personal well-being of teachers" and "reflects, through dialogue

335

with staff, on the vision of the center" stand out. The mean (M) of 2.71 and standard deviation (SD) of 0.74 suggest a consistency in the responses.

Similarly, in "Coordination Leadership", the majority of responses are around "agree" and "strongly agree". The highest mean (M=3.02) and a SD of 0.77 indicate a positive acceptance of this type of leadership. The top three highest averages coincide with those given to the management figure "Evaluates staff performance", "Encourages me to innovate my teaching practices" and "Seeks the personal well-being of teachers". Within this figure, another item that stands out "is available after class to assist faculty when they need help".

In contrast, "Center Functioning" reveals less variability in responses, with a mean of 2.81 and a SD of 0.73. The general perception of this dimension is positive, although with less enthusiasm than in the previous dimensions.

One of the items that stands out coincides with those indicated for the figures of Management and Coordination: "The management team shows willingness towards innovation". Thus, we can interpret that the innovation profile of the institution is present in the perception of the professors.

On the other hand, "The members of the management team are clear about the school objectives" and "The management team assumes the responsibilities linked to their position".

Finally, the item "In our center there is an effective management team" is also weighted, obtaining a higher mean than the score given to the figures of Management and Coordination separately (3.15 vs. 2.91 and 3.02 respectively), which suggests that there is greater acceptance of a leadership figure as a management team than as individual entities.

In the "Job Satisfaction" dimension, the mean of 2.96 indicates a positive level of satisfaction. The highest averages were obtained for the items "I am proud to be part of the team at this center", "I am glad I chose this center to work at" and "I want to continue to play my professional role at this center".

"Leadership Identity" obtains the lowest mean (M=2.56), suggesting a lower prevalence of the leader teacher figure compared to the management and coordination figures.

The correlations between the dimensions of the study will be presented below. The correlation analysis reveals significant and positive relationships between the dimensions as shown in the following table:

Table 4

Analysis of questionnaire correlations

Spearman's Rho	Management leadership	Coordination leadership	Operation of the center	Job satisfaction	Leadership identity
Management leadership	1,000	,738**	,790**	,606**	,301**
	.	,000	,000	,000	,000
	169	169	169	169	169
Coordination leadership	,738**	1,000	,707**	,491**	,312**
	,000	.	,000	,000	,000
	169	169	169	169	169
Operation of the center	,790**	,707**	1,000	,638**	,398**
	,000	,000	.	,000	,000
	169	169	169	169	169
Job satisfaction	,606**	,491**	,638**	1,000	,470**
	,000	,000	,000	.	,000
	169	169	169	169	169
Leadership identity	,301**	,312**	,398**	,470**	1,000
	,000	,000	,000	,000	.
	169	169	169	169	169

Note. **. The correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (bilateral).

"Management Leadership" shows strong correlations with "Coordinating Leadership" (0.738) and "Center Functioning" (0.790). As expected, coordination and leadership form a single management team, reflecting a close connection.

"Coordinating Leadership" is also strongly correlated with "Center Functioning" (0.707), indicating that both aspects are interrelated in the perception of the respondents.

Regarding "Job Satisfaction", a moderate correlation is observed with "Management Leadership" (0.606) and "Coordinating Leadership" (0.491), suggesting that effective leadership contributes positively to job satisfaction. The strongest connection is with "Center Functioning" (0.638), indicating that effective center management significantly influences job satisfaction.

In contrast, "Leadership Identity" shows weaker correlations with the other dimensions, indicating a less obvious connection to overall leadership and center functioning.

In summary, the results suggest a generally well-weighted leadership in the educational context analyzed. Areas of strength include reflection on the school's vision, innovation in teaching practices and clarity in school objectives. However, there are areas that could benefit from improvement, especially in the promotion of leadership identity among the teaching staff.

The correlations underscore the critical importance of effective leadership to center functioning and job satisfaction.

Qualitative Phase

The final scheme of the frequencies of the dimensions, with the addition of the emerging dimensions that emerged from the interviews, is presented below:

Figure 2
Frequency of dimensions
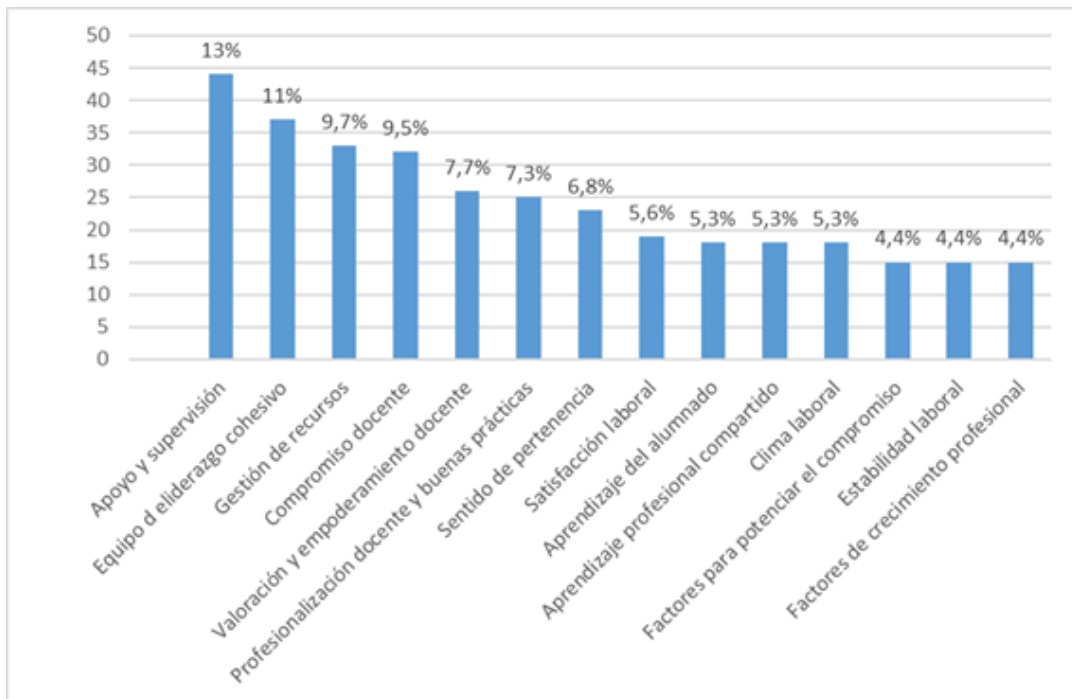
The qualitative analysis of the interviews reveals several interrelationships between the dimensions evaluated. The main conclusions are discussed below, highlighting quotes from the participants that illustrate the connection between the categories.

Job satisfaction and sense of belonging are visible in the participants' responses, emphasizing the importance of feeling comfortable in the institution and being aligned with its values and guidelines. The relationship between job satisfaction and sense of belonging is linked to the work environment, leadership, professional development, and institutional support. The connection with the leadership team, in particular, stands out, demonstrating that support and accompaniment contribute significantly to the feeling of belonging.

Some fragments that visualize it:

" The attitude of a school's management team towards its teachers plays an important role in the commitment and sense of belonging that can be maintained with the school in which they work. In my personal case, I feel a lot of support and accompaniment, both professional and personal, from the Management Team of the school where I work. These factors affect my work and my attitude towards the place and the people I live with on a daily basis" (Teacher 1)

The history and profile of the center also emerge as elements that strengthen the sense of belonging, contributing to the commitment and emotional connection of teachers with the institution.

"I believe that the knowledge of the history of the institution strengthens day by day the commitment and sense of belonging that I have with the center" (Teacher 2).

"The history of the school helps me feel part of that legacy and the social and educational responsibility it represents" (Teacher 3).

Likewise, collaboration, teamwork, and shared professional learning emerge as fundamental to satisfaction and a sense of belonging. Resource management, especially in

terms of leadership that fosters coordination spaces and opportunities to exchange ideas, is presented as an effective strategy to professionalize teaching practices and promote good practices.

"The promotion of good practices can be observed in the coordination, in the informative talks, in the exchange meetings, in the seminars, in the motivation towards work, in the school results" (Teacher 2).

"We promote teacher welfare policies, collaborative work, listening and action with respect to initiatives proposed by teachers, the creation of various projects, the promotion of collectivity and fellowship, a space to listen to problems and search for solutions" (Teacher 4).

Institutional support and supervision are considered essential for teachers' professional growth. The connection between leadership, professional development and individual growth is evident in the responses.

In conjunction with this, the participants' responses showed that job stability is associated with teaching commitment. The connection between feeling part of the institution, team support and job stability drives teachers' commitment.

"The support I receive on a daily basis from the management team, as well as the value they place on me as a teacher, has a direct impact on my commitment to the center" (Teacher 5).

Participants also make reference to the connection between this commitment and job stability, finding diverse responses regarding this relationship. There is also a difference between those participants with a term contract and those with a permanent contract:

Participants with a definitive contract:

"I definitely think there is a relationship between job stability and a person's level of commitment to where they work." (Teacher 6)

Participants with term contracts:

"Since it is a term contract, it generates some insecurity" (Teacher 7).

The leadership modality is presented as a determining factor in teacher satisfaction and commitment. Leadership team cohesion, teacher appreciation and empowerment, along with effective support and supervision, contribute to student learning. The direct relationship between positive leadership, team motivation and impact on learning is highlighted in the responses.

"From the management team it is crucial for me to be supportive and to have the sense of support and appreciation of the work. I am shown almost daily that my work is valued and that I am doing it correctly" (Teacher 8)

"I feel that I am listened to when it comes to suggestions for classroom practices and that, when I exchange these ideas, I am given the confidence that I can successfully put these ideas into practice" (Teacher 9)

"Our coordination provides us with endless opportunities for professional improvement, bringing us new ideas, reading material, and opportunities for individual and collective reflection, which motivates us to innovate, improve, evaluate and reflect on our work. At the same time, the evaluations have always been very positive, always highlighting strengths and marking weaknesses with constructive comments. In this way, it motivates us, it empowers us as teachers" (Teacher 10).

Discussion and Conclusions

This research arose with the intention of analyzing and determining the incidence of distributed leadership on the sense of belonging and teacher commitment in the establishment of good practices at the Elbio Fernández School and High School. For this purpose, existing leadership patterns were examined using the DLI questionnaire and interviews were conducted to deepen the sense of belonging, commitment and teacher professionalization.

In order to assess whether the research has answered the questions and achieved the proposed objectives, the results are presented on the basis of these. In general terms, it can be concluded that all the proposed objectives have been satisfactorily met.

In relation to the first specific objective, regarding the type of leadership that prevails at Elbio Fernandez, both the questionnaire and the interviews provided essential information, revealing a distributed leadership with emphasis on direction and coordination. The cohesion of the leadership team is highlighted, giving it high marks for effective management. In addition, it is noted that team members take responsibility and are available to support the faculty when needed.

This corresponds with recent literature, concluding with what was exposed by Olanrewaju and Okorie (2019), who considered that the most valued characteristics of leadership are connected to the leader's accessibility, decision-making capacity and commitment to his staff.

Likewise, it is clearly evident from both instruments, a special emphasis on the disposition to leadership innovation, being an essential part of the institution's profile.

At the same time, the results reveal a follow-up of teachers' trajectories through evaluation processes. In the participants' responses, classroom observations and constructive feedback are specifically mentioned, showing the leadership team's interest in collaborative learning, with attention to their formative processes emerging as something that could still be improved. This can also be connected to one of the key professional growth factors identified, which highlighted teachers' interest in obtaining greater time flexibility and resources for their professional development (Thien and Adams, 2021).

The findings also show that teachers value the autonomy they enjoy in their classrooms, and that there is room for improvement in terms of participation in decisions of a more institutional nature. This is in agreement with other studies such as Szczesiul and Huizenga (2014).

Specifically, the figure of teacher leaders was found to be more blurred compared to those who held the position formally, in line with the study by Printy and Liu (2021).

At the same time, they emphasize the opportunities it provides for leadership, teamwork, coordination and exchange of experiences.

Regarding the question about the sense of belonging of the teachers working in the institution, in accordance with the second objective of the research, it was confirmed that the sense of belonging is positively influenced by the leadership, the work environment and the support of the management team. This corresponds with the role given to work climate in recent literature, with the leader being understood as an integral component of creating and maintaining school climate (Legros and Ryan, 2015).

Next, the question about teacher commitment at the school was answered, verifying the third objective, as a high level of commitment was identified among participants, with factors such as leadership and a sense of belonging playing a fundamental role. It was also found that teaching commitment is influenced by job stability and recognition by the leadership. This is supported by research such as that of

Hickey et al. (2022) and Liu et al. (2021) in which they emphasize how distributed leadership fosters innovation and collaboration among teachers, which is critical to engagement and job satisfaction. Kirk et al. (2023) highlight in their research that distributed leadership is key to strengthening teacher commitment, as it promotes collaborative decision-making and autonomy within the classroom, which increases educational innovation and professional satisfaction.

This connects with the next objective, finding that distributed leadership, focused on direction and coordination, has a positive impact on commitment and job satisfaction. The favorable impact of this modality on the involvement of teachers, also connected to an identification with the values proposed by the center, has been demonstrated.

This is confirmed in the literature, where commitment is recognized as loyalty to the values of the center, as well as the emotional bond that teachers demonstrate towards their work, constituting in turn an internal force that drives them to improve their job performance (Altun, 2017). According to Thien et al (2014) it is essential to know the level of commitment of teachers, as it reflects their involvement in the center and the degree to which they agree with and strive to achieve the set goal. Harris (2022) also highlights how a distributed leadership approach can enhance ownership by fostering a culture of support and cooperation among faculty members, which, in turn, increases faculty commitment and engagement with institutional goals. This perspective supports the relationship between leadership, sense of belonging, and teacher commitment.

With respect to the examination of the relationship between leadership and the establishment of "Best Practices", it was found that leadership favors innovation and the adoption of best practices. This vision is consistent with a view of leadership as a special form of influence that inspires change and fosters professional cooperation toward the creation of alternative practices. In this regard, Amores and Rittaco (2011) emphasize the importance of establishing a collaborative professional culture that enables and facilitates change for improvement. Amels et al. (2023) emphasize that the distribution of leadership not only favors innovation in the classroom, but also influences teachers' motivation to improve their practices, since they feel more supported and valued by their leaders. This finding highlights the importance of shared leadership that empowers teachers to actively contribute to the continuous improvement of the educational environment.

 It was also corroborated that distributed leadership and empowerment contribute significantly to teacher professionalization, with participants especially valuing the recognition of teaching dedication.

This is consistent with the study conducted by Kun and Gadanecz (2019) in which recognition is highlighted as a source of job satisfaction. At the same time, the importance of positive emotions, such as self-efficacy and agency as motivation towards a goal. Nguyen et al. (2023) explore the relationship between distributed leadership and teacher well-being, highlighting how educational leaders can positively influence teachers' engagement and sense of belonging by fostering a collaborative environment that allows for autonomy and professional development

Similarly, having examined how distributed leadership and teacher empowerment influence teacher professionalization, the need for greater participation in institutional decision-making is evident, with a greater prevalence of autonomy in classroom practices.

 It was also confirmed that teacher empowerment is positively related to work commitment, highlighting the importance of promoting structures that facilitate the active participation of teachers. Lam et al. (2023) emphasize the importance of distributed leadership practices to promote innovation in schools, linking them directly to improved job satisfaction and teacher commitment. According to their research, the

341

empowerment of teachers and their active participation in decision making are key factors in increasing their sense of belonging and promoting greater collaboration within the educational community

Listening and respect are mentioned by the authors Olanrewaju and Okorie (2019) in their study, presenting themselves as an essential characteristic of leadership, highlighting the attention and teaching motivation towards the achievement of their objectives. Legros and Ryan (2015) stress the importance of involving all stakeholders and giving them an authentic and valued voice.

The findings of the specific objectives described above allow us to address and respond to the general objective by satisfactorily identifying the impact of distributed leadership on teacher professionalization, their sense of belonging to the institution and their degree of commitment.

Understanding these factors contributes to the continuous improvement of educational management, promoting an environment conducive to the integral development of teachers and, therefore, to the educational success of students.

In the present study, the dimensions of job satisfaction and sense of belonging were addressed jointly, recognizing their close interrelation in the participants' responses. The connection between feeling satisfied in the work environment and experiencing a strong sense of belonging was evidenced by several key factors. These include the work environment, leadership, professional development of teachers, respect for institutional guidelines, shared values, alignment with the methodology promoted by the center, institutional support for teachers' performance, accompaniment and achievement of professional objectives.

The identification of the participants with the educational center was based on the concordance between institutional values and guidelines and their own. This alignment was identified as an essential component in cultivating a deep-rooted sense of belonging. Likewise, the support of the leadership team was highlighted as a significant catalyst for job satisfaction and the strengthening of the emotional bond with the institution.

In conclusion, this study has provided a comprehensive view of the leadership dynamics at Elbio Fernandez, highlighting areas of strength and opportunities for improvement. The conclusions and recommendations provide a valuable starting point for the ongoing development of educational institutions.

Thus, the findings of this research have practical implications for educational management:

- Promotion of Distributed Leadership: recommendation to promote distributed leadership that strengthens the participation and commitment of all members of the institution, strengthening the active participation of teachers in decision making.
- Recognition and support: emphasis on constant recognition and support for teachers, fostering an environment conducive to professional and personal growth.
- Incentive to Good Practices: stimulus to the implementation and exchange of good practices among teachers, with special attention to continuous improvement.
- Promotion of the sense of belonging: deepening of additional strategies to strengthen the sense of belonging, which results in a greater involvement of teachers with institutional projects.
- Formative evaluation: strengthening of formative evaluation instances, especially those related to teacher participation, to improve the quality of leadership.

For future research, we suggest conducting longitudinal studies to evaluate the impact of interventions over time, expanding the sample and extending the study to multiple educational institutions to identify common or divergent patterns in different contexts, and exploring additional variables that may influence the sense of belonging, teacher commitment and professionalization.

References

Altun, M. (2017). The Effects of Teacher Commitment on Student Achievement. *International Journal of Social Sciences and Educational Studies*, *3*(3), 51-54. https://doi.org/10.23918/ijsses.v3i3p51

Amels, A., Davis, B., & Walker, H. (2023). Exploring the effects of distributed leadership on teacher motivation and school development. *Educational Leadership Review*, 35(3), 45-59. https://doi.org/10.1111/edlr.11245

Amores Fernández, F. J., & Ritacco Real, M. (2011). Las buenas prácticas en el ámbito educativo y el liderazgo de la escuela en contextos de mayor riesgo de exclusión escolar y social. *Revista Iberoamericana De Educación, 56*(3), 1-14. https://doi.org/10.35362/rie5631519

Asociación Médica Mundial. (2013). Declaración de Helsinki: Principios éticos para las investigaciones médicas en seres humanos. Adopted by the 18th World Medical Assembly, Helsinki, Finland, June 1964 (amended October 2013). https://www.wma.net/policies-post/wma-declaration-of-helsinki-ethical-principles-for-medical-research-involving-human-subjects/

Bagur Pons, S., Rosselló Ramon, M. R., Paz Lourido, B., & Verger, S. (2021). El enfoque integrador de la metodología mixta en la investigación educativa. *RELIEVE - Revista Electrónica de Investigación y Evaluación Educativa*, 27(1). https://doi.org/10.30827/relieve.v27i1.21053

Bektaş, F., Kılınç, A. Ç., & Gümüş, S. (2022). The effects of distributed leadership on teacher professional learning: mediating roles of teacher trust in principal and teacher motivation. *Educational studies*, *48*(5), 602-624.

Benawa, A. Gea, A y Willyarto, M. (2017). Improving Teacher's Commitment by Improving External Factors. *Adv. Sci. Lett., 23*(2), 925–929. https://doi.org/10.1166/asl.2017.7440

Chatwani, N. (2018). *Distributed leadership: the dynamics of balancing leadership with followership.* Palgrave Macmillan.

García-Martínez, I., Montenegro-Rueda, M., Molina- Fernández, E. & Fernández-Batanero, J. M. (2021). Mapping teacher collaboration for school success. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, *32*(49), 631-649. https://doi.org/10.1080/09243453.2021.1925700

García-Martínez, I., Molina-Fernández, E. & Ubago-Jiménez, J. L. (2020). School Principals in Spain: Interplay of Leaders, Teachers and Context. *Sustainability*, *12*(4), 1469. https://doi.org/10.3390/su12041469

Hardhienata, S. (2019). Increasing Teacher's Commitment to Organizations through the Development of Organizational Culture and Situational Leadership. In *Proceedings of the 3rd Asian Education Symposium (AES 2018).*

Harris, A. & Spillane, J. (2008). Distributed leadership through the looking glass. *Management in Education*, *22*(1), 31-34. https://doi.org/10.1177/0892020607085623

Harris, A. (2014). *Distributed leadership matters: Perspectives, practicalities, and potential.* Corwin Press.

Harris, A. (2022). Leading with distributed leadership: Advancing teacher autonomy and collaboration for school improvement. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, *25*(4), 392-410. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603124.2021.1903563

Hartley, D. (2023). Education policy, distributed leadership and socio-cultural theory. In *Mapping the Field* (pp. 199-210). Routledge.

Herrera, G. (2012) Relación entre sentido de pertenencia y estabilidad laboral. [Doctoral dissertation]. Universidad Rafael Landívar.

Hickey, D., Harris, A., & Kirk, E. (2022). Distributed leadership and teacher commitment: Exploring the role of professional autonomy. *Journal of Educational Leadership*, 34(2), 129-145. https://doi.org/10.1080/00222548.2022.1847521

Hulpia, H., Devos, G. & Rosseel, Y. (2009). Development and Validation of Scores on the Distributed Leadership Inventory. *Educational and Psychological Measurement - EDUC PSYCHOL MEAS, 69,* 1013-1034. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013164409344490

Kachchhap, S. y Horo, W.. (2021). Factors Influencing School Teachers' Sense of Belonging: An Empirical Evidence. *International Journal of Instruction, 14*, 775-790. https://doi.org/10.29333/iji.2021.14444a.

Krichesky, G. y Murillo, F. (2018). La colaboración docente como factor de aprendizaje y promotor de mejora. Un estudio de casos. *Educación XX1, 21*(1), 135-155.

Kun, A., Gadanecz, P. (2022). Workplace happiness, well-being and their relationship with psychological capital: A study of Hungarian Teachers. *Current Psychology, 41*, 185–199. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-019-00550-0.

Lam, S., Lee, K., & Chan, C. (2023). Enhancing innovation in schools: The role of distributed leadership in fostering teacher collaboration. *Educational Psychology Review*, *35*(1), 57-75. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-022-09630-9

Legros, I., & Ryan, T. G. (2015). Principal traits and school climate: Is the invitational education leadership model the right choice? *Journal of Educational Leadership, Policy and Practice, 30*(2), 14–29.

Leithwood, K. A., Mascall, B. y Strauss, T. (Eds.). (2009). *Distributed leadership according to the evidence* (pp. 223-251). Routledge.

Liu, Y., Bellibaş, M. Ş., & Gümüş, S. (2021). The effect of instructional leadership and distributed leadership on teacher self-efficacy and job satisfaction: Mediating roles of supportive school culture and teacher collaboration. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, *49*(3), 430-453.

Liu, X., Li, H., & Zhang, J. (2021). The impact of distributed leadership on teacher autonomy and collaboration: Evidence from a large-scale study. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 49(5), 785-804. https://doi.org/10.1177/1741143220902148

Nguyen, M., Tan, C., & Lam, D. (2023). The relationship between distributed leadership and teacher well-being: A focus on autonomy and professional collaboration. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 110, 103591. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2022.103591

Olanrewaju, O., & Okorie, V. (2019). Exploring the Qualities of a Good Leader Using Principal Component Analysis. *Journal of Educational Psychology, Psychotherapy and Management, 9*, 142-150. https://doi.org/10.2478/jeppm-2019-0016

Pérez Peña, F., Cobaisse Ibáñez, M., Villagrán Pradena, S., & Alvarado, R. (2023). Aspectos generales del uso de métodos mixtos para investigación en salud. *Medwave*, *23*(10), e2767. https://doi.org/10.5867/medwave.2023.2767

Pesonen, H Rytivaara A., Palmu L., & Wallin A. (2020). Teachers' Stories on Sense of Belonging in Co-Teaching Relationship. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research, 65*(3), 425-436. https://doi.org/10.1080/00313831.2019.1705902

Pedraza, E., Amaya, G., y Conde, M. (2010). Desempeño laboral y estabilidad del personal administrativo contratado de la Facultad de Medicina de la Universidad del Zulia. *Revista de Ciencias Sociales, 16*(3), 493-505.

Printy, S., & Liu, Y. (2021). Distributed leadership globally: The interactive nature of principal and teacher leadership in 32 countries. *Educational administration quarterly*, *57*(2), 290-325.

Szczesiul, S. (2014). The [un]spoken challenges of administrator collaboration: An exploration of one district leadership team's use of protocols to promote reflection and shared theories of action. *Journal of Educational Change, 15*(4), 411–442.

Szczesiul, S., & Huizenga, J. (2014). The burden of leadership: Exploring the principal's role in teacher collaboration. *Improving Schools, 17*(2), 176-191.

Thien, L. M., Razak, N. A., & Ramayah, T. (2014). Validating Teacher Commitment Scale Using a Malaysian Sample. *SAGE Open, 4*(2). https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244014536744

Thien, L. M., & Adams, D. (2021). Distributed leadership and teachers' affective commitment to change in Malaysian primary schools: the contextual influence of gender and teaching experience. *Educational Studies*, *47*(2), 179-199.