Pedagogical leadership approach in the direction, administration and management of public secondary schools in the Bata School District, for the improvement of student learning

Enfoque de liderazgo pedagógico en la dirección, administración y gestión de centros secundarios públicos del Distrito escolar de Bata, en pro de la mejora de los aprendizajes de los estudiantes

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ABSTRACT

The pedagogical leadership of managers for the improvement of student learning in public secondary schools in the Bata school district is being relegated to the background in the agenda of priorities of the educational administration of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea and some of the principals who currently exercise this responsibility. From this perspective, in order to reverse this trend, the present qualitative research study has been carried out with the general objective of: To describe the circumstances that contribute to the reinforcement of the pedagogical leadership of the directors of public secondary schools in the Bata school district, in the dimensions of direction, administration and management of these schools; in order to provide support to teachers in their classroom work, for the achievement of the improvement of student learning. The data obtained from the instruments applied (interviews, direct classroom observations, exploratory workshops) were processed using the Atlas Ti programme, version 7.5, creating three hermeneutic units: students, teachers, directors or rectors of the secondary schools in this school district. The following results were obtained: improvement of the direct and indirect pedagogical leadership competencies and practices of inspectors and principals of public secondary schools in Bata, through (implementation of the actions included in the strategy to be designed and in learning from best practices). Teachers improve their pedagogical practices in their classrooms, and reflect on their pedagogical and didactic practices.

RESUMEN

Palabras clave:
Liderazgo pedagógico, Calidad educativa, Gestión escolar, Planificación, Liderazgo transformacional.

El liderazgo pedagógico de los directivos para la mejora de los aprendizajes de los estudiantes de centros secundarios públicos del distrito escolar de Bata, está siendo relegado en el segundo plano en la agenda de prioridades de la Administración educativa de la República de Guinea Ecuatorial y parte de alguno/as director/as que actualmente ejercen esta responsabilidad. Desde esta perspectiva, con el fin de invertir dicha tendencia se ha llevado a cabo el presente estudio investigativo de corte cualitativo, cuyo objetivo general es: Describir las circunstancias que contribuyan al reforzamiento del liderazgo pedagógico de los directivos de centros secundarios públicos del distrito escolar de Bata, en las dimensiones de dirección, administración y gestión de dichos centros; en aras a aportar el apoyo al profesorado en su labor de aula, para la consecución de la mejora de los aprendizajes de los estudiantes. Los datos obtenidos, a partir de los instrumentos aplicados (entrevistas, observaciones directas en las aulas, talleres exploratorios) fueron procesados a través del programa Atlas Ti, versión 7.5, creando tres unidades hermenéuticas: estudiantes, docentes, directivos o rectores de centros secundarios de dicho distrito escolar. Se obtuvo como resultados: mejora de las competencias y prácticas de liderazgo pedagógico, directo e indirecto, de los inspectores y directores de los centros secundarios públicos de Bata, mediante (implementación de las acciones recogidas en la estrategia que será diseñada y en el aprendizaje desde las mejores prácticas). Los profesores mejoran sus prácticas pedagógicas en sus aulas de clase, y reflexionan sobre sus prácticas pedagógicas y didácticas.

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Introduction

Recent studies on pedagogical leadership reveal that strengthening leadership in educational institutions has become a priority of educational policies in various countries around us (Pont, & Moorman, 2008), (Vaillant, 2015). Thus, studies on pedagogical leadership, both national and international, coincide in pointing out that it has an indirect effect on the improvement of educational processes and results (Hallinger, 2019), (Leithwood, & Sans, 2016), (Guardia & Triadó, 2016).

Leadership in the educational context is eminently pedagogical (Argos and Ezquerra, 2013), (Contreras and Gonzalez, 2016), (Gento and Orden, 2016), (Raelin, 2016) and, following Bolivar (2010), aims to improve the quality and effectiveness of the educational institution, expressed in student learning. Thus, pedagogical leadership influences a set of factors (resource management, setting and evaluation of educational goals, support for teaching quality, distribution of pedagogical tasks, collaboration with the environment, etc.) that, in short, improve the work of teachers in the classroom and in the center, with an indirect impact on student learning.

On the other hand, pedagogical or educational leadership plays a critical role in the success of the sustainable development of a quality education system and student learning outcomes (Bush, 2015), (Hallinger, 2019). This highlights the particularity of leadership that demonstrates the process of intentional influence to achieve the expected results by managing and inspiring others (González Fernández et al. 2016), (Hallinger, & Heck, 2010), (López-Gómez and González Fernández, 2018). Since pedagogical leadership has several formal actions (Bush, 2016), (Pont, & Hopkins, 2008) used to accomplish complex tasks (Holmes et al. 2013) that must adapt to the different needs and constraints of each school context, formal leaders (e.g., principals) cannot lead alone in an era with high levels of demand and accountability (Gunter et al., 2013), (Spillane, 2005).

It is worth highlighting recent studies on intermediate leadership (Bush, & Glover, 2014), (Harris, Jones, Ismail, & Nguyen, 2019), which are acquiring renewed interest as they are considered key figures in the formative gear of educational institutions (Hargreaves, & Shirley, 2019), (Sepúlveda & Volante, 2019). As noted by Harris et al. (2019) in a recent study, middle leaders have a prominent role in improving student learning outcomes by having a "dual track" in their leadership.

The General Education Law of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea (number 5/2007), in its articles 103.2 and 105.1, includes the competencies attributed to the management team and specifically to the director as a pedagogical leader, who is called upon to provide pedagogical support to the teaching staff. However, the actual applicability of these regulations is relegated to the background when it comes to appointing the directors of public secondary schools. This currently translates into poor teacher performance and, consequently, low student achievement. Therefore, in addition to the general objective mentioned in the summary, the following specific objectives are proposed: (1) Identify the main problems and transformational needs of the educational system in Equatorial Guinea related to basic secondary education and specifically the public secondary schools, (2) Analyze the current context of pedagogical leadership in public secondary schools in the Bata school district, to identify the profile of managers and the type of pedagogical leadership they exercise; It is expected, from the general objective, that the strategy designed will strengthen the leadership of the management team of secondary schools to improve teaching performance and improve student learning.

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Method

As for the methodological design, the research work emphasizes the qualitative method, although with some quantitative implications.

The study was conducted with one hundred and fifty (150) students from the four public secondary schools in the Bata school district. One hundred (100) ESBA and high school teachers participated. Thirty (30) managers were from public secondary schools and the remaining ten (10) were from private schools. Meanwhile, at the level of inspectors, some thirty-five (35) education inspectors from the school district participated.

The students were the first group of key informants, with whom direct observation in the classrooms was applied, followed by group interviews. These are educational institutions that take in students from modest families, between 13 and 20 years of age, corresponding to the lower secondary level.

ESBA teachers, whose sample numbered one hundred (100), constitute the second stakeholder group considered key to obtaining evidence of the support they receive from their management team.

Managers participated with a sample of forty (40) managers from public secondary schools in the Bata school district, who were classified as the third group of key informants.

The sample design for the qualitative study has been intentional, non-probabilistic, where all the hermeneutic units, students, teachers and management team will participate freely in the information collection tools applied, considering their availability.

According to the methodological criterion, this research work, being qualitative in nature, has required, therefore, the establishment of categories of analysis and the definition of operational terms. Categories are understood as epistemological computers, thematic grouping fields, implicit assumptions in the problem and analytical resources as significant units that give meaning to the data and allow them to be reduced, compared and related (Taylor and Bogdan, 2000).

The main categories and subcategories identified in the study are as follows:

Pedagogical leadership, curriculum management, coexistence o School climate and student support, resources and results o School success.

For each category system mentioned above, the following subcategories emerged:

Teacher and student support, didactic planning, curricular organization, classroom teaching, learning assessment, school coexistence, human and material resources, as well as evaluation results data or figures.

The main instruments that were used for data collection in the framework of this research work were:

1.- Direct observations and interviews with key informants (students) with the development of a semi-structured classroom observation guide and the purpose of this instrument was to gather information on the type of interaction that occurs between teachers and students and the performance of both with a view to improving learning.

2.- Semi-structured interviews with key informants (teachers): the purpose of these interviews was to find out the perception that teachers have of their managers and

whether or not they feel that this perception influences their performance or professional performance.

3.- Exploratory workshops were organized by the Ministry of National Education for all managers, heads of departments and education inspectors in the Bata school district.

Results

For the development of the observation and interview activities aimed at the students, we started from the letter of collaboration that was sent to the directors of the four schools involved. In this context, the departmental directors, together with the classroom tutor teachers, carried out the planning activity to identify the different timetables, the subjects and, above all, the possible classrooms to be observed, as well as the modalities of interviews to be conducted with the students. At the end of the implementation of this research phase, the following synoptic table was drawn up:

Table 1.
Summary table of observations made at ESBA centers.

Name of center	Classrooms Observed	Subjects taught during observation	Dates	No. of students observed/ classroom
INES Ndjong Melén	1st A and 4th B	Mathematics, Spanish Language and Literature	15/11/ 2022	83
INES Nana Mangué	3º C	Descriptive geography universal	18 /11/2022	53
INES Father Sialo	2ND A	Spanish language and Literature	25/11/2022	4 6
INES Carlos Lwanga	1ºB, 3ºD and 4ºG	Physics and Chemistry, French and Biology and Geology	28/11/2022 30/12/2022	112

Note: the table reflects the plan that served as a reference to carry out direct observation as part of the instruments applied in the four public secondary schools in Bata, to obtain information and/or desired findings.

Of the two hundred and ninety-four (294) students observed in the classrooms of these centers, one hundred and fifty (150) were interviewed, which represents 100% of the students in the sample.

1.-*Description of the work-school environment:* In the eight (8) classrooms observed, there was a high degree of neatness capable of fostering a decent working environment in the classrooms.

Of the four secondary centers observed, only two, INES Ndjong Melén and Carlos Lwanga, have infrastructures in a general state of disrepair.

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The visual materials on the walls referring to the subjects taught are not visible, except for the descriptive geography class, where the teacher brought the world map and used it during the lecture.

2.- Description of how students sit in the observed classrooms:

With the exception of INES Nana Mangué, which has movable tables and chairs and, therefore, suitable for organizing collaborative work among students, the rest of the classrooms in the centers visited have classic fixed desks that do not favor group work. All students are seated in rows or in rows facing the teacher.

3.-Description of the motivational level of the students in the classrooms observed:

For the analysis of the students' motivational state, attention was focused on the degree of student participation during the development of the classes. It is therefore a variable of utmost importance and even a prerequisite for any learning process, which explains the projection made on it. In this sense, the one that was generally appreciated was the low participation of students in class.

The hermeneutic analysis was based on questions 6 and 12 of the guide, which were formulated with the intention of measuring the students' level of understanding of the concept of pedagogical or managerial leadership, and to clarify the opinion of the students themselves in relation to the leadership exercised by their managers with a view to improving their learning. The different answers obtained by the students' collective through audios and videos used during the interviews made it possible to analyze them, creating a hermeneutic unit in Atlas Ti, version 7.5.8.

a) *First Hermeneutic Unit: Students*

Thus, from the question about what students understand about the direct and indirect pedagogical leadership of managers, an axial coding could be done with the Atlas Ti software, which would lead to a conclusion or brief theorization as illustrated in the figure:

Figure 1.

Axial coding and theorizing hermeneutic unit Students
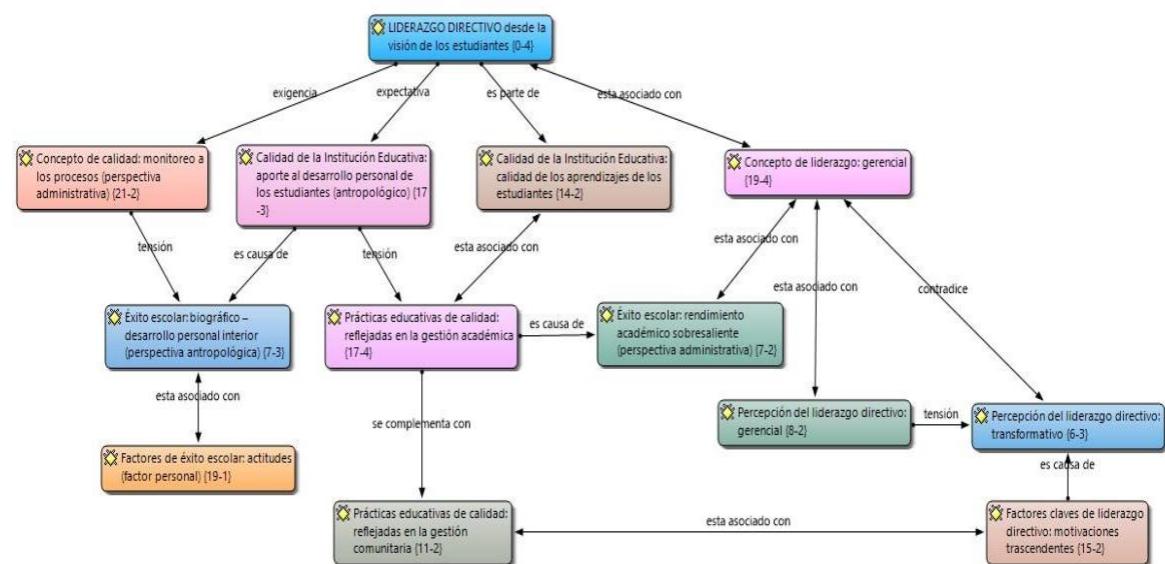
Note: The figure shows the Pedagogical Leadership from the students' view (Atlas Ti) and the key elements with which they are associated to this variable, as well as those that are considered complementary, according to the hermeneutic unit, the students.

Students conceive managerial leadership from a managerial, transformational and situational perspective (Figure 1), emphasizing the managerial, transformational and interactive approaches. Insisting on the importance of administering, managing and directing quality training processes involving the main actors of the teaching-learning process.

Regarding the category of leadership perception of principals, the first unit, students perceive this group as those who lead the educational institution; to the extent that they exercise managerial leadership, representing a parent who guides learning until educational objectives are achieved (Figure 1).

It is also observed that it is related to the dimension of transformational leadership, with emphasis on the centralization of the student in his own learning process. Thus, it is inferred that all of the manager's actions tend to guide students to make decisions autonomously, making each one take the convenient path to achieve his or her goals. This is manifested in expressions such as: "I consider the director as a father who guides his children to work hard to succeed in their studies or to pass the course and be a useful person tomorrow" (interview with key informant).

For the selection of the teachers participating in the research, the same procedure was followed for the first focus group. Thus, the selection of the twenty-five (25) teachers from each center was made randomly among the four participating centers, i.e., a total of one hundred (100) teachers in the sample.

2.-*In the interview with ESBA teachers*, a guide was elaborated and applied to the second population of the universe (students) of this research.

The main findings obtained from these semi-structured observations and the questionnaire submitted to the group of teachers in the sample were, at first, treated and quantified globally without being considered center by center, as shown in the following graph:

Figure 2.
Types and levels of support offered by managers to teaching staff in the participating centers.

Types and levels of support offered by managers to the teaching staff of the centers studied

- Apoyo administrativo   55%
- Apoyo pedagógico 30%
- Apoyo moral   10%
- Apoyo personal   5%
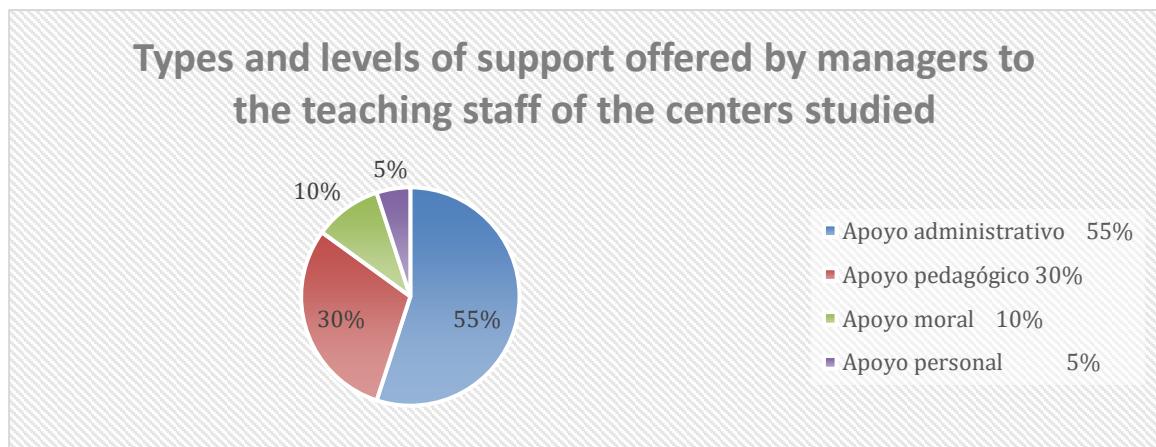
Note. The table reflects the preponderance of administrative support offered by managers to teachers,

to the detriment of pedagogical and other types of support for effective leadership by the management team.

The result of the graph shows the type and levels of support offered by managers to teachers in their respective ESBA centers. It is observed that 55% of the teachers interviewed stated that they had received administrative support from their managers, essentially characterized as follows:

- Extension of the document of taking possession for new teachers who are assigned to the center.
- Distribution of the annual plan at the beginning of each course, which helps us to orient our didactic planning.
- It makes administrative arrangements to improve the school infrastructure.

With regard to pedagogical support, it should be noted that 30% of the teachers interviewed stated that they had received pedagogical support from their managers, specifically in terms of:

- Some orientations in didactic programming.
- Occasional organization of some didactic seminars for specific areas and these are usually occasions where they improve their teaching methodologies.

However, the group of teachers interviewed did not fail to express how much they expect to receive from their managers to improve their performance, and they have identified their development needs (current and future), programming learning platforms to expand their intervention scenario in the teaching-learning process and, above all, receiving regular feedback on their classroom practices.

"I believe that the more support we receive from the management team the more motivated we would be teaching our classes" (Interview excerpt)

With regard to the moral support of managers, 10% of the teachers interviewed stated that they received moral support from their managers, understood here as the armor of values that the manager-teacher should wear as a profession and vocation. In this sense, the aim is to assess the teachers' perception of the moral authority figure embodied by their principal.

"Both the teaching staff that we are and our students need the moral support of the principal; I still believe that we are the mirror of our students, unless there is someone who says otherwise" (Excerpt from the interview)

In their statements, teachers state that the responsibilities of the management team should be focused on the school's results, without neglecting the development of social skills that contribute to a good working environment, pedagogical skills in their level of training and improvement, and above all, they should have high expectations in emotional skills to interact with all members of the educational community.

Although it is still said that academic results should be the first concern of management teams, however, I personally believe that the development of the social

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competencies of teachers and especially of students is essential to create a true educational community (Interview excerpt).

With regard to the leadership style of managers in the performance of their duties, according to the appreciation of the teachers interviewed, as one of the objectives of this research, four styles have been categorized: liberal, authoritarian, transactional and transformational.

As was done with the first student focus group, a hermeneutic unit was opened with the teachers to study the main category of pedagogical leadership and all the subcategories associated with it. This focused on obtaining information about the conception and perception that this group has about the pedagogical leadership of the management team, the factors that influence leadership, their understanding of educational quality and the factors that contribute to educational quality and school success, among others. These were the results obtained with the coding in Atlas Ti.

Figure 3

Axial coding and theorizing hermeneutic unit Teachers
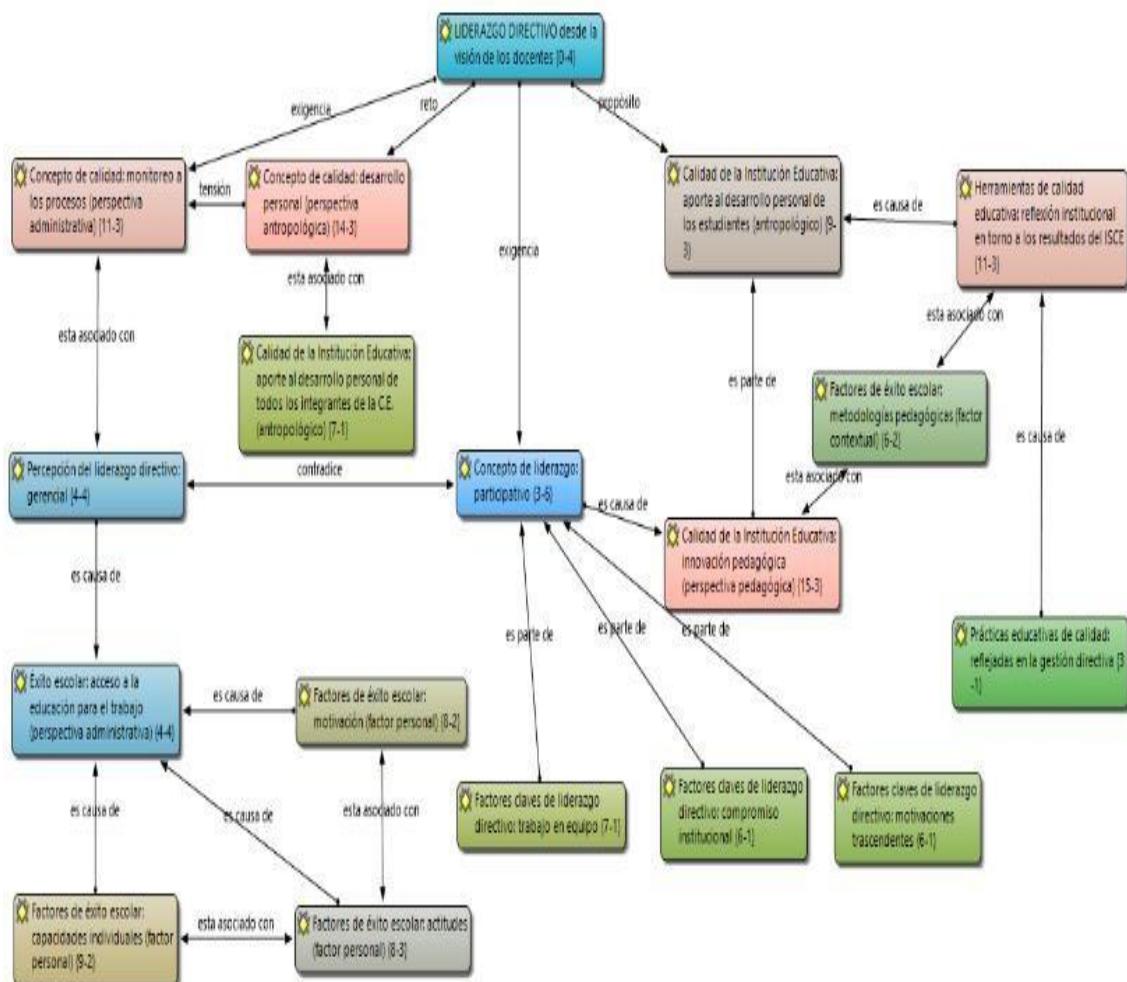
Note: the figure reflects Pedagogical Leadership from the teachers' perspective, establishing the demands of pedagogical leadership: The monitoring of processes, the quality of personal

development and educational quality, institutional quality, as well as the factors associated with this variable.

In relation to the second hermeneutic unit, the majority of the teachers participating in the interview perceive the leadership of the teaching director from the perspective of the dynamizing dimension of collaborative teams (see Figure 2). This shows that the director must be aware of the existence of a team of collaborators and that it is necessary to promote teamwork. It is possible for the director to use his powers to delegate functions as proof of his leadership, as well as an exercise in empowerment. This collaborative paradigm leads to the active participation of each member of the educational community, taking advantage of the potential and strengths that each member can contribute to achieve the proposed objectives. From this point of view, the following is an excerpt from a comment made during an interview with one of the teachers:

> I am aware that listening is important and is proof that no one is indispensable and that there is a mutual dependence among all of us, in view of achieving school success, as well as improving the learning of our students. (Interview excerpt).

The third instrument applied was the exploratory workshop with key informants (education directors and inspectors). The Bata workshop was attended by forty (40) managers and department heads from the four (4) public and some private secondary schools with ESBA in the Bata school district and thirty-five (35) education inspectors from the same school district. During the workshop we worked with a questionnaire from the General Directorate of Educational Planning, but in our research work it was subjected to an internal consistency test by means of the Expert Consultation Method using Delphi techniques. This resulted in a final questionnaire that was agreed upon and reliable. This questionnaire focused on the profile, continuing education, access to the position of director, etc. The results of this workshop were expressed in percentages, as detailed below:

A. Pedagogical leadership dimension:

The pedagogical leadership of principals or directors as a support to ESBA teachers in their classroom work, the results of the survey were as shown in the following figure.

Figure 4
Results of the exploratory workshop with managers of centers participating in the Bata workshop.
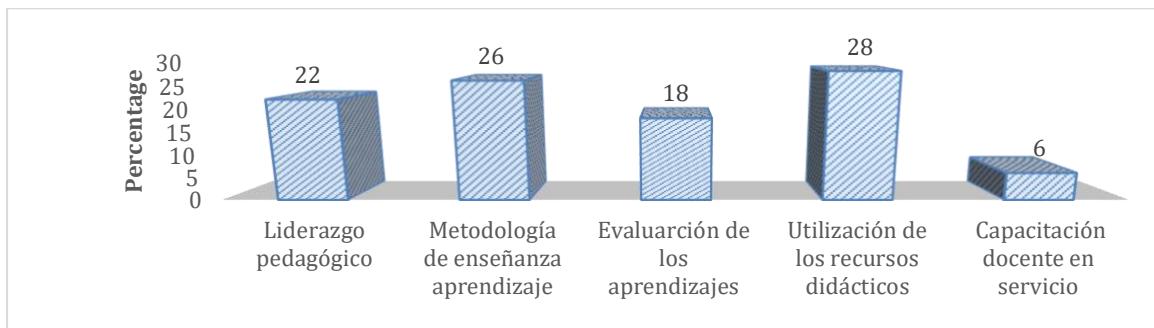
Note. The figure describes the main variables studied in the workshop with Bata managers and inspectors: leadership, teaching methodology, type of evaluation and teaching methodology.

Pedagogical leadership, in relation to teaching methodology and the use of didactic materials, scored less than 22% (17), which attests to the deficiencies in the direct and indirect pedagogical leadership of the management teams of the centers studied. Taking into account the dimensions studied in this area, the following findings have been found:

- Although there are departments in some larger secondary centers, most of them do not function effectively. The testimony of one of Carlos Lwanga's teachers was illustrative when he expressed himself in the following terms:

"Currently I believe that all professors belong to a certain department, but, nevertheless, not all of them are participants in terms of the functioning of the same and this sincerely discourages some of us who see the importance of these spaces for reflection and exchange" (Interview excerpt).

- The deficiencies observed in the system of supervision and pedagogical follow-up by inspectors and directors of secondary schools mean that many teachers do not attend classes regularly, do not carry out regular didactic planning and do not ensure that their students learn what they are supposed to learn at this educational level.

"I don't like to be constantly supervised, although I think it's necessary for the director to do his or her job of supervision". (Excerpt from the interview).
- The basic mechanisms for monitoring and supervision are regular meetings of senates or departments, visits to classrooms, attendance control and scheduling requirements, but these are not effectively implemented, nor are they used to reflect on daily practice. From this statement we extracted the comment of a teacher interviewed who said:
"I think that the Ministry of National Education itself should collaborate in the supervision and follow-up of the management teams and of these towards the teachers by offering tools and training on a regular basis" (Excerpt from the interview).

B. *About the Teaching and Learning Methodology*

This section describes the actions taken by teachers in the classroom to facilitate their students' learning. Articulates the strategies used to organize their classrooms, support their students and facilitate their learning.

Regarding the teaching methodology, 26% (20) of workshop participants argue that:

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- The textbook is the didactic tool most used by teachers in their programs and for the development of their classes, where dictation, the use of the explanatory method and individual work predominate.
- According to the teachers interviewed, few colleagues do daily/weekly didactic planning, nor do they know what students should learn in ESBA to develop skills.

C. On Ways to Assess Learning

Learning assessment means a variety of methods for assessing the knowledge, skills and abilities of learners before, during and after the learning process. Attributing to the evaluation a score of 18% (14) as an assessment made by the managers, is to recognize, according to them, that:

- The use of summative evaluation predominates; evaluation by processes is not appreciated. It seems that what some teachers call continuous assessment is not assessment by process, but assessment by subject.

"I personally advocate continuous evaluations, even though that is a lot of work for me." (Excerpt from the interview).

- The mechanism available to the teacher to check the learning acquired by the student is limited only to the review exercises of the topics, homework and the written and/or oral exam. Here is an excerpt from a math teacher at the Father Sialo Center:
"As a math teacher, I have no other strategies to check that my students learn other than by giving them hands-on exercises" (Interview excerpt).
- Teachers do not value the activities carried out by students in teams (presentations, problem solving, various research, etc.); they give priority to the exam grade.
"We value the students' activities, what happens is that the classrooms are saturated and correction is an ordeal" (Interview excerpt).

D. On the Use of Teaching Resources

This section explores how teachers use textbooks and other teaching resources for planning, implementing and evaluating the teaching and learning process.

28% (21) of all workshop participants expressed moderate optimism regarding the use of didactic resources, since:

- In public secondary schools, most students do not have textbooks. In some private schools, students rent/borrow textbooks during the school year.
- Teachers use textbooks to select topics by term (programming), summarize, dictate, explain and recommend assignments or exercises.
- Some teachers present deficiencies in the handling of textbooks and some content, which causes them to teach some content and not others. Causes include:
o Inconsistency in the training specialty and the subject taught,
o Lack of willingness to grow professionally, and
o That the Educational Administration allocates them without taking into account the needs of the center's teaching staff.

E. On the Process of In-Service Teacher Training and Education

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In-service teacher training involves the creation of systems and structures that facilitate the continuous growth of teachers didactically through collaboration, reflection and the reorientation of pedagogical practices. If we take into account that the essence of educational quality lies in teacher education and training. It is surprising that the level of support received by in-service teachers is estimated at 6%(5), since:

- Most meetings at ESBA centers focus on center operations, subject matter programming, and student performance at the end of the year. There is little support for the professional development of in-service teachers or attention to updating at the level of methodology.
- The inspectors and directors who are, by legal framework, responsible for providing pedagogical support to teachers, do not do so because many are not academically trained or do not have the experience to do so.

F. About the Self-Direction of the Focus Group of Managers of Participating Centers:

The guide proposed by Antúnez (1991) has been followed to identify the tasks involved in the performance of managerial action. The objective of this analysis was to gather from a direct source the difficulties encountered by managers in their professional activity, independently of the assessments of other members of the educational community.

The first area of this analysis is focused on Self-knowledge, which forces the manager to reflect on his own work, from a perspective of self-evaluation and heteroevaluation.

98% (74) of the managers and inspectors who responded to the questionnaire stated that they had not submitted to other colleagues the discussion and reflection on their own work and, above all, on their performance as a center director. Due to the fact that there is no culture of personnel performance evaluation in the educational centers.

With regard to stress management, 75% (57) of the managers and inspectors participating in the Bata workshop were managers of public secondary schools, who stated that the management of civil servants in the school is the main source of stress, since this group does not depend financially on the management teams, as they are paid directly by the educational administration.

C) Third Hermeneutical Unit: Directors

Regarding the hermeneutic analysis with the focus group of school principals or directors. This analysis was carried out on the basis of the guideline prepared for this purpose, focusing on the factors of school success as assessed by school directors or principals according to Atlas Ti. The following result was obtained, according to the statistical coding of the main and emerging categories, as illustrated below.

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Figure 5.

Axial coding and theorization hermeneutic unit Rectors or directors:
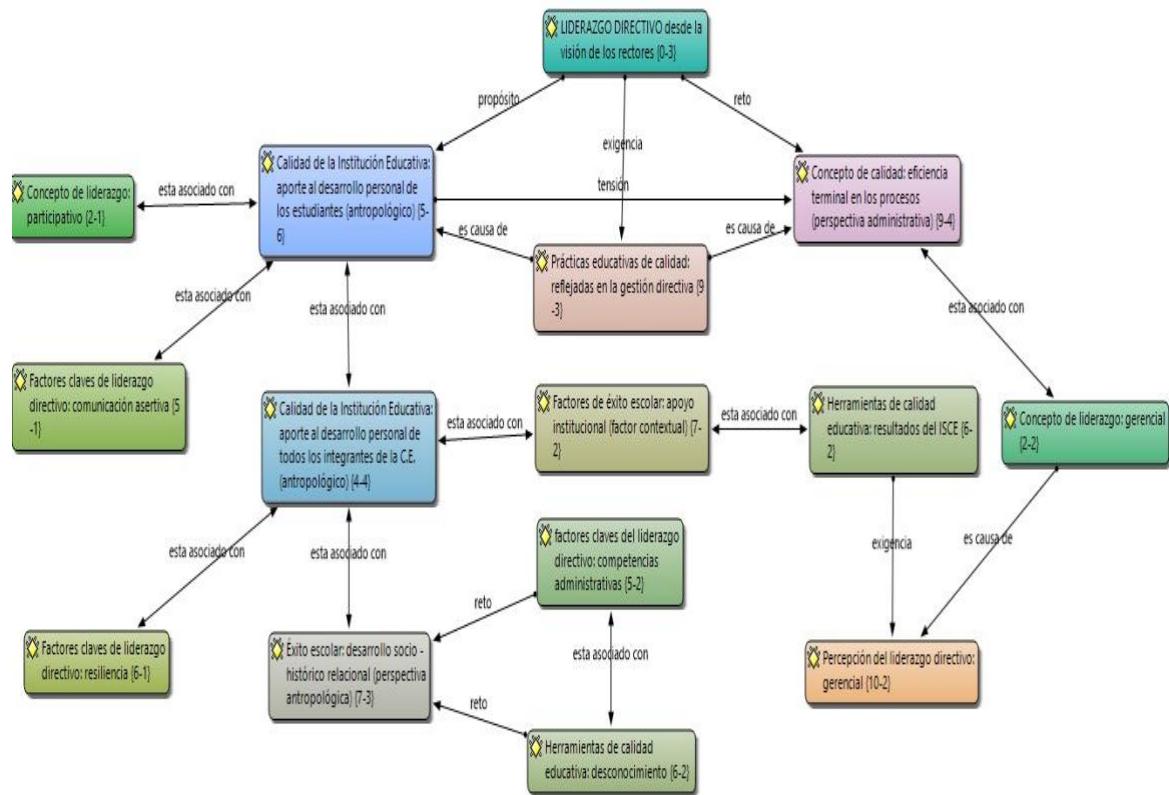
Note: Pedagogical leadership from the perspective of the directors or principals themselves (Atlas Ti), prior to a codification and subsequent theorization of pedagogical leadership.

In the category of key factors for school success (see Figure 5, authors' elaboration from Atlas Ti), principals are interested in the institutional support of the educational community, considered a crucial element to achieve school success. The empowerment of the director as an institutional manager, capable of promoting teamwork, is considered. From this perspective, it works to involve all members of its community, instilling a true culture of experience sharing and joint construction of viable educational projects. In this way, all members of the educational community feel that they are part of a team that aims to synergistically achieve school success for their students.

According to the rectors, the vision of leadership is participatory, where decisions are intended to be democratized. Likewise, he is concerned with team participation in decision making, ensuring that the two overriding factors governing his leadership and linked to his role are resilience and assertive communication.

Discussion:

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The qualitative analysis carried out on the three hermeneutic units of the Atlas Ti; they agree in pointing out the importance of pedagogical leadership for the improvement of student learning.

As the first and second of the hermeneutic units of this study, the importance of the support of the teaching team for the performance of the teaching professional was reflected. Thus, leadership, a managerial competence within the school organization, comprises strategies of high social impact aimed at the quality purposes of any educational institution (Figures 2 and 3).

Pedagogical and professional teacher training promotes significant changes in each of the aspects that make up the educational institution, where its intrinsic learning process is recognized as a fundamental pillar in the quality processes of the individual and the group in charge, being one of the main purposes of the educational system in Equatorial Guinea, as stated in the preamble of the General Law of Education (Decree Law No. 14/1995 dated January 9).

When approaching the vision of leadership from the managers' perception, it is shown that their concept of quality is related to the terminal efficiency of processes, which means that educational practices are reflected in managerial management. However, there is a clear intention to contribute to the personal development of students, which is consistent with the conception of school success linked to the socio-historical development of students. From this position, it was clear that for the rectors, institutional supports are factors that determine student success.

For our analysis, it is evident that pedagogical leadership with a transformational dimension makes it possible to generate environments with high expectations for all members of the educational community, who perceive greater effectiveness in the functioning of the school, as is evident from the interviews held with a group of directors of Bata's subsidized schools.

On the other hand, some of the results of this research highlight the lack of accessibility of public secondary school principals to all members of the educational community, considering that working as a team with teachers to detect needs, knowing the individual situations of students and encouraging the participation of families in school life are aspects that, if promoted by the principals, would lead to school success.

In analyzing the pedagogical leadership of current managers in Bata's public secondary schools, the lack of managerial autonomy of principals in public schools was noted in comparison to their colleagues in private schools. The transformational dimension of leadership that they are called to exercise before the rest of the members of the educational community is missing, as well as their challenging position as responsible for the institution. Many of the decisions they have to make clash with those of the macro level, erroneously subtracting the spirit of the General Education Law in force in the Republic of Equatorial Guinea in its article 105, paragraphs 4, 5 and 6.

On the other hand, from the perspective of the universal literature on educational leadership, it has been well demonstrated in this work that the best educational systems in the world have always prioritized policies focused on strengthening educational institutions within the framework of a decentralized, participatory, transparent and results-oriented management. The objectives set out in this research work have been achieved, since the problems related to public secondary education and the type of leadership of its directors were analyzed, and it became clear that the participants need

the promotion of pedagogical leadership as a primary factor to improve school quality and success. From this perspective, a transformational or contingency leadership model is proposed by the school principal and the education inspector, who are responsible for curriculum development at the micro and meso levels of the Equatorial Guinean education system.

Conclusions:

This study highlights the importance of the pedagogical leadership of managers and inspectors for the proper functioning of an ABSE secondary school, judging by the data obtained from the instruments applied. The results obtained through the hermeneutic analysis of pedagogical leadership, as the main category, and the subcategories that revolve around it, such as educational quality, school success, success factors, etc., have demonstrated the close relationship between the pedagogical leadership of the management team and school success. Thus, from the perspective of students and teachers, regarding the concepts of quality, school success and managerial leadership, it was possible to conclude:

Students have the perception of the managerial leader as a person who is in charge of all the processes that take place within the educational institution. To this end, he/she must be a manager, capable of managing academic, administrative, community and financial matters for an efficient solution to the problems presented by both students and teachers. For teachers, the pedagogical leadership of the management team as the competence of those who promote teamwork, so it is important to take into account participation and collaborative work in decision making.

The limitations of the present study include the following:

• At the methodological level, being qualitative research, the sample size was not sufficiently representative, considering the number of secondary schools and managers in the Bata school district.

• The absence of research precedents related to pedagogical leadership in the context of Equatorial Guinea.

The purpose of this work is to provide an innovative vision, consisting of establishing a coherent relationship between the pedagogical leadership of a center's directors and school success or improvement in student learning, which translates into educational quality. To this end, we emphasize the dimension of continuous improvement of institutional processes and human quality as the best strategies to achieve this educational quality.

Finally, it is recommended that the academic community in the university environment continue researching the topic of pedagogical leadership and its impact on students' academic performance. Above all, to carry out comparative studies between the pedagogical leadership of public and private school principals in order to close the existing gap in terms of teaching performance and improvement of student learning. It is necessary to create programs and strategies that favor the linkage of the school with the community and, therefore, with the family, as well as the promotion of a distributed leadership in front of the teachers' collective.

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