

The Human Factor in Primary Bilingual Programs: The Management Teams' Perspective

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ABSTRACT: In Spain, the interest in bilingual education has led to the implementation of bilingual programs in a large number of schools. Our study uses descriptive research to analyse the perceptions of school management teams regarding the impact of human resources on the design, implementation and supervision of bilingual programs in primary schools within the autonomous community of Castile and Leon. To this end, the answers provided by 70 participants to an 'ad hoc' questionnaire were subject to scrutiny. Besides the socio-demographic characteristics of the sample, four dimensions were thoroughly studied: organizational resources (including the design and supervision of the bilingual project as well as the degree of familiarity with and the acceptance of the project), human resources (that is, the number of specialist teachers, teachers with L2 accreditation, and language assistants available), teacher profiles (describing turnover rate, L2 level, and participation in CPD courses) and management teams profiles (providing information on training in bilingual education and on access to CPD courses and on resources for the evaluation of the program). The analysis of the research data is conclusive in identifying the training of management teams and the turnover rate of specialists as key to the success of school bilingual programs.

Key words: bilingual education, human resources, management team, assessment.

El factor humano en los programas bilingües de educación primaria: la perspectiva de los equipos directivos

RESUMEN: En España, el interés por la educación bilingüe ha llevado a su implementación a numerosos centros escolares. Nuestro estudio constituye una investigación descriptiva acerca de la percepción de los equipos directivos sobre el impacto de los recursos humanos en el diseño, implementación y supervisión de los programas bilingües en colegios de educación primaria de Castilla y León. A tal fin, se sometieron a escrutinio las respuestas a un cuestionario 'ad hoc' completado por 70 participantes en tales equipos para estudiar, además de las características sociodemográficas de la muestra, cuatro dimensiones: recursos organizativos (relativos al diseño y supervisión del proyecto bilingüe y a su conocimiento y grado de aceptación por parte del profesorado), recursos humanos (esto es, el número de docentes especialistas, con acreditación lingüística y auxiliares de conversación disponibles), perfiles docentes (tasa de interinidad, nivel de

L2 y participación en cursos de formación continua) y perfiles de los equipos directivos (relativos a la formación en enseñanza bilingüe, al acceso a cursos de formación y a recursos para la evaluación del programa). Nuestro análisis resulta concluyente al identificar la formación de los equipos directivos y la estabilidad del profesorado especialista como elementos esenciales para el éxito de los programas escolares bilingües. Palabras clave: educación bilingüe, recursos humanos, equipos directivos, evaluación.

1. INTRODUCTION

Within the European Union, Spain is one of the most pro-active countries in embracing bilingual education to the extent that it is regarded as one of the leading countries in Content and Language Integrated Learning practices (Lasagabaster & Ruiz de Zarobe, 2010). An overview of the literature on bilingual programs in Spain shows recurring elements behind either the success or the failure of these programs. After the analysis of qualitative data gathered from Castile and Leon bilingual programs' management teams, we will specifically address those which may fall within the broad category of "the human factor", which include but are not restricted to aspects concerning the human resources available at their schools.

In the first place, regarding the teachers' professional profile, the successful implementation of any kind of bilingual program is largely viewed as dependent on the availability of teachers both proficient in the foreign language and experienced or trained, and qualified, in bilingual teaching methodology (Thomas & Collier, 2003; Dalton-Puffer, 2007; Desai, 2010; Navés, 2011; Cabezuelo & Fernández, 2014). Even if competence in the foreign language is one of the teachers' main concerns in bilingual schools (Olivares & Pena, 2013), Durán and Beltrán (2016) concluded that although teachers perceive it as a prerequisite, once the program is started, this falls behind methodological skills "specifically aimed at gaining CLIL expertise as this becomes prominent in their daily practice" (2016: 84).

Secondly, the stability of teachers at schools and their commitment to the programs are also decisive in their success. It is crucially important for teachers to become familiar with the project, to be fully cognizant of the school context, and to get engaged in Continuing Professional Development (henceforward CPD) schemes (Robledo & Cortez, 2002). From an educational policies' perspective, authorities should also make an effort to provide teachers involved in bilingual programs with courses suited to meet their needs, for "it seems that the bilingual project has experienced very little progress regarding teachers' demands for training and development of teaching skills. Quite the contrary, results show that teacher training has decreased dramatically" (Cabezuelo & Fernández 2014: 60).

Additionally, parental involvement is equally deemed to play a seminal role (Robledo & Cortez, 2002; Arias & Morillo-Campbell, 2008) for the students to obtain good results. However, while according to Montemayor (2004), their carers' collaboration in the learning process has an even greater impact on their academic achievement than their socio-economic status, more recent studies in Spain challenge this view and claim that students with lower socio-economic status obtain poorer results in content subjects of CLIL programs than those from more privileged backgrounds (Fernández, Fernández & Arias, 2017).

Supervision and evaluation of bilingual programs are considered to be a fourth key to their success (Robledo & Cortez, 2002; Villarreal, 2009). Unfortunately, according to Travé (2013), prior to launching a bilingual program, schools usually follow rigidly designed protocols within a highly bureaucratic framework. Its guidelines are often ignored and they are neither consulted to track, monitor, assess, or review the program's progress and outcomes nor modified in accordance to the overall evaluation of the project.

Finally, as pointed by Fernández, Pena, García & Halbach (2005), and by Pena and Porto (2008), teachers increasingly demand effective measures to cater for diversity and inclusion with regards SEN (Special Education Needs) children. Indeed, Laorden and Peñafiel (2010) showed that 69% of bilingual schools management teams experienced difficulties to meet the needs of SEN pupils in the English class, which was also further emphasized by Lova, Bolarín and Porto (2013).

2. AIMS

This article seeks to analyse some of the key features which characterize the components associated to “the human factor”, including human resources available in primary schools running bilingual programs. These will be examined from four different angles: organizational resources, human resources, teacher profiles and management team profiles. In other words, we aim to draw valuable information from the views of members of bilingual schools management teams on:

- Organizational resources: design, acceptance and assessment of the bilingual program; role of the management team; teachers' acquaintance with the project.
- Human resources: availability of specialist teachers, language assistants, SEN teachers and number of teachers with training in CLIL methodology.
- Teacher profile: turnover rates and degree of teacher involvement in the program and in CPD courses.
- Management team profile: program evaluation training, access to CPD courses, provision of external consultants and availability of standardized quality assurance procedures.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Design

In order to achieve the aims of our study, a non-experimental qualitative research design was applied with an ex-post-facto methodology using questionnaire studies (Morales Vallejo, Urosa, & Blanco, 2003). Thus, instead of manipulating any variables to analyse the changes undergone by others, we measured the variables in their natural context to examine an initially unidentified reality.

3.2. Instrument

A 1/5 Likert-like scale questionnaire including dichotomic and quantitative questions was designed to gather the required information for our study, a part itself of a wider research on the organizational aspects of bilingual programs. In order to validate it, standard procedures were followed prior to its application and thus, a final draft designed by the authors based on a similar study (Laorden y Peñafiel, 2010) was sent to a group of nine teachers (six head teachers, two head of studies and one secretary) participating in this research as subjects and experts. They were asked to provide feedback on the relevance, clarity and suitability of the items and to offer suggestions for improvement after which two items were rejected as they were deemed redundant, the wording of three items was reformulated for the sake of clarity and, following the suggestions of the experts, two new items were included (items eight and nine in Table 1). The final version of the instrument consisted of 42 items.

The final questionnaire was divided into five sections, namely, sociodemographic characteristics, organizational resources, human resources, teacher profiles, and management team profiles.

- The socio-demographic characteristics of the sample include data such as the name of school and the name of town/village, and the following variables: school type (state-run vs state subsidized), language of the bilingual program, subject role in the management team (head teacher, head of studies or secretary), teaching experience, age, and sex of the respondents.
- The organizational resources were assessed through the answers to nine items with a 1/5 Likert-like scale ranging from value 1 (totally agree) to 5 (totally disagree) (see Table 1).
- The human resources section includes five items; while four of them are dichotomic (yes/no), one provides three possible options: All, Some or Don't know (see Table 2).
- The teacher profiles were drawn from the answers to five items concerning the turnover rate of teachers at bilingual schools (ranging from 0 to 6 or more) (see Table 3) and from those given to six 1/5 Likert-like scale items to express their interest in professional development, with values ranging from not interested (1) through completely interested (5) (see Table 4).
- Finally, the management team profile section is made up of six dichotomic (yes/no) questions regarding both their qualification and the support provided to assess the bilingual programme of their school (see section 4.5.)

3.3. Participants

Starting with the members of management teams at primary schools in Castile and Leon who were running a bilingual program in the school year 2013/2014, and using a non-probabilistic accidental sampling, a final sample of 70 schools was obtained. The response rate was 25%. Replies were received from a total number of 70 schools out of the 280 that met the initial requirements. With this sample size, a maximum sampling error of 9 % was obtained. In the Results section, the most relevant socio-demographic characteristics of our sample will be described.

3.4. Procedure

A non-probability sampling procedure with volunteers was applied. First, the 280 schools with bilingual programs in Castile and Leon in the year 2013/2014 were identified. Next, in December 2014 contact was established with all the schools through their institutional e-mail address and they were sent a link so that the members of the management team involved in the study could complete the questionnaire through Google Drive. In April 2015 the last answers were recorded.

3.5. Analysis

A SPSS (23.0) tool for Descriptive Statistics was used, which allowed us to outline the data and present the answers to the items of the questionnaire through tables so as to highlight the most salient results after a calculation of the standard measures of the central tendencies (mean) and of dispersion (standard deviation). The results are drawn from the analysis of each and every single item. In Table 4 the Crombach's Alpha was calculated for internal consistency, with a satisfactory coefficient (.748).

4. RESULTS

4.1. Socio-demographic characteristics of the sample

Out of the 70 schools which completed the questionnaire, 57 were state-run (81%) and 13 were state-subsidized (19%). The vast majority of them (93%) had English as the language of the bilingual program, 4% of schools chose French and 3 % German.

Regarding their role in the management team, our sample shows the following distribution: 54 were head teachers (77%), 9 head of studies (13%) and 7 secretaries (10 %). Participants in this study have solid teaching experience: 83 % of the participants in our sample have been teaching for over 15 years, 7 % between 10 and 15 years, 9 % between 6 and 10 years and just 1% have less than 5 years of teaching experience.

In the year in which this study was conducted, 76 % of the teaching staff of the primary sector in Spain were women (European Commission, 2013). This report also states that, even though there are more women than men at these levels of the educational sector, members of the management teams are predominantly male. Our sample confirms these findings as 41 of our subjects are men (59%) and 29 women (41%).

4.2. Organizational resources

The questions submitted to the management teams regarding organizational resources are related to the design, degree of acceptance and assessment of the bilingual project, the leading role of the management team as well as the levels of awareness or knowledge of specialist and generalist teachers regarding the implications of the project for the school curriculum. The results are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Percentage of functional resources at schools (n=70)

	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	S.D.
1. The bilingual project was designed keeping in mind the school context	0	2.8	11.3	33.8	52.1	4.35	0.795
2. The management team supervised and led the development of the project	1.4	0	2.8	23.9	71.8	4.65	0.678
3. The management team has been trained in bilingual education and is familiar with these programs	4.2	16.9	40.8	19.7	18.3	3.31	1.090
4. An evaluation model for the program has been designed	1.4	4.2	26.8	38.0	29.6	3.90	0.928
5. The Project was unanimously approved by the teaching staff	0.0	1.4	15.5	31.0	52.1	4.34	0.792
6. The Project was unanimously approved by the school council	0.0	0.0	2.8	19.7	77.5	4.75	0.499
7. Parents have in-depth knowledge of the program and know how to support the students	0.0	4.2	19.7	49.3	26.8	3.99	0.802
8. Specialist teachers are familiar with the Project and its curricular modifications	1.4	1.4	2.8	36.6	57.7	4.48	0.753
9. Generalist teachers are aware of the curricular modifications	0.0	8.5	29.6	29.6	32.4	3.86	0.975

The design of a project with clear and realistic objectives that are adapted to the context of the school is usually considered of paramount importance for the success of bilingual programs (Howard, Sugarman & Christian, 2003; Thomas & Collier, 2003). Teachers, parents or carers and students should have full knowledge of these objectives.

Question one shows that most of the subjects (52.1%) are highly satisfied with the design of the project, although there is also a significant number of participants (14.1%) who believe that it did not bear in mind the characteristics of the school. Regarding question 2, most participants state that, as members of the management team, they have supervised and led the design and implementation of the project, adapting it to the context of the school. However, the answers to question 3 show that, surprisingly, more than 60% of the subjects involved in the leadership of the bilingual program have little or no knowledge of bilingual education.

The level of satisfaction with the evaluation model of the program (question 4) remarkably ranges from medium to low (31 %) to very high (29.6%). With regard to the acceptance and support of the program, questions 5, 6 and 7 have yielded very positive results although some data show interesting differences. We can observe that the level of approval of the

program by the school council is higher than that of the teaching staff. This is due to the fact that the project has to be approved at school level before it is presented to the school council. The teacher representatives usually cast a vote in favour of the program since they are representing the majority opinion of their colleagues. It is also worth noticing that, according to the school management team, most parents know how the program works and how to support the students.

Questions 8 and 9 try to shed light on the teachers' knowledge of the curricular modifications resulting from the implementation of the bilingual program. Management teams show a higher level of satisfaction with the specialists than with the generalist teachers.

4.3. Human resources

With reference to human resources, the questions are oriented to draw information from the management team about the availability of teachers to keep up with the demands of the bilingual program. Therefore, the questions are categorical. The results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Percentage of human resources at schools (n=70)

		Yes	No
1. There are enough specialist teachers at school to teach the classes		88.40	11.60
2. Teachers have accreditation in the foreign language		95.70	4.30
3. The school has language assistants who are native speakers		44.90	55.10
4. The school has specialist teachers to assist students with difficulties with the program		37.70	62.30
5. Bilingual program teachers have been trained in CLIL methodology	All 38.20	Some 39.70	Don't know 22.10

Questions 1 and 2 in Table 2 show us that most schools have enough specialist teachers and almost all of them have the level required by the educational authorities. Nevertheless, we can see that there is still a meaningful number of schools (11.60%) that need specialist teachers. Question 3 shows that most of the schools (55.1 %) that have participated in the survey do not have language assistants, although management teams, in their qualitative comments, consider them to be a very important cultural and linguistic resource. Question 4 highlights the need of 62.3 % of the schools to have more specialist teachers to assist students who have difficulties in following the bilingual program. Our data also show that 22.10% of the management teams have information about their staff's training in CLIL methodology and 39.70% of them state that not all the teachers have training in bilingual education methodology.

4.4. Teacher profiles

When analysing teacher profiles, we wanted to receive information from management teams about the numbers of permanent and non-permanent teachers in the school and in the bilingual program, the turnover rate of teachers and their interest in CPD courses or activities to improve the bilingual program. The results are shown in Tables 3 and 4.

Table 3. Turnover rate of teachers at schools

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6 or more	Mean	S.D.
1. Specify the number of specialist teachers in bilingual education that are permanent	17.4	29.1	14.5	7.2	11.6	4.3	15.9	2.43	2.083 n=69
2. Specify the number of specialist teachers in bilingual education that are NOT permanent at school	20.3	21.9	32.8	17.2	4.7	1.6	1.6	1.75	1.321 n=64
3. Specify the number of classroom teachers of bilingual groups that are permanent	8.8	7.4	14.7	7.4	10.3	10.3	41.2	3.99	2.134 n=68
4. Specify the number of classroom teachers of bilingual groups that are NOT permanent	25.8	24.2	27.4	11.3	9.7	0.0	1.6	1.61	1.383 n=62

Our results show that a significant number of schools (17.4%) either do not have a single specialist teacher who is permanent in the bilingual program or have only one permanent specialist (29.1%). Question 2 also shows that 57.9 % of the schools have two or more specialist teachers who are non-permanent.

The purpose of questions 3 and 4 is to obtain information regarding the job permanence rates of classroom teachers who, even if they are not specialists, are in charge of a bilingual program class. Both questions are complementary and the results show very interesting data: 27.4% of the subjects declare having two classroom teachers of bilingual groups as temporary teachers and 22.6% indicate that they have three or more teachers in that situation. The need

for specialist teachers is directly linked to the number of groups receiving bilingual instruction at school as well as to the courses where it is implemented. When the questionnaire was conducted, most schools (49 out of 70) had implemented the bilingual program in all of the primary courses which means they would need several specialist teachers, in addition to the foreign language teacher. The ideal situation would be for all classroom teachers to receive training for bilingual education which would ensure the provision of teachers to help students preventing them from falling behind.

Table 4. Percentage of teachers and professional development

	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	S.D.
1. How would you rate the level of teacher mobility at your school?	21.7	27.5	23.2	20.3	7.2	2.64	1.236 n=70
2. Non specialist teachers are competent in the foreign language	13.4	53.7	23.9	6.0	3.0	2.31	0.891 n=67
3. Non specialist teachers participate in development courses in the foreign language	18.5	43.1	29.2	6.2	3.0	2.32	0.954 n=65
4. Specialist teachers participate in development courses related to methodological improvements	0.0	15.4	26.2	41.5	16.9	3.60	0.949 n=65
5. The teaching staff participates in activities that help improve the bilingual program	4.4	11.8	29.4	33.8	20.6	3.54	1.085 n=68
6. Value the support of the teachers in the project as it is currently being carried out	0.0	4.3	17.4	46.4	31.9	4.06	0.820 n=69

In order to have an overview of the results obtained in Table 3, we asked the members of the management teams to evaluate the turnover rate of teachers in their schools. Question 1 in Table 4 shows that 27.5% of participants consider the turnover rate to be low and 21.7% consider it to be very low or non-existent. Nevertheless 23.2% of the management teams consider that the turnover rate is at mid level and 20.3% find it high. Finally, 7.2% of the participants consider that the school has a very high turnover rate. These data show big differences between schools.

Teachers' lack of permanence in one school can also be an obstacle to the promotion of participation in CPD courses or activities that may improve the program. Questions 2 and 3 are complementary and aim to obtain information regarding non specialist teachers and their interest in the foreign language of the program. Results show that over 67% of non specialists have very little or no knowledge of the foreign language, which is consistent with the fact that this is not obligatory for them. However, results also show that over 60%

of these teachers do not participate in any CPD courses to bridge that gap.

The answers to question 4 show that 41.5% of our subjects give a high rating and 16.9%, a very high rating to the level of participation of specialist teachers in CPD courses related to methodological improvements. These data are quite positive even if over 41% of participants still give medium to low ratings.

Questions 5 and 6 seek to obtain information about the degree of participation of teachers in activities that will help improve the program and its level of acceptance after several years of implementation. Results show that 33.8% of subjects rate teachers' level of commitment as high and 20.6% as very high. Although this can also be considered very positive, we still find that over 16% of participants give a low or very low rating for teacher commitment.

We need to underline both the reasonable level of commitment (mean 3.60) on the part of specialist teachers to CPD initiatives and their participation in activities with a view to improve the program (mean 3.54). The fact that school administrators give an average rating of 4.06 to the level of support of teachers to the bilingual program is equally noteworthy. Once again, we have found noticeable differences between the schools participating in this survey.

4.5. Management team profile

As bilingual projects are long-term projects, it is imperative to supervise, modify and adapt them to the changes and needs of the school. The management team needs to be prepared to assume these processes according to professional standards so as to make the correct decisions or, when necessary, to report to and demand further intervention from the educational authorities.

In this section we aim to analyse if, or, to what extent, management teams are qualified to evaluate the bilingual program at school; whether they have access to CPD courses in evaluation; whether the school has access to external evaluation agents and, whether there is any kind of evaluation guidance that can be followed. We asked six dichotomic (yes/no) questions and we will next briefly report on the results.

Our first question regarding training in bilingual education and its evaluation shows that only 48.60% of the management teams include a trained member. When asked if the management team has access to training courses in the evaluation of bilingual programs, only 51.40% gave a positive answer, a situation that we consider to be of concern and in need of improvement. Nonetheless, when asked if the management team oversees the evaluation of the bilingual project, 81.40% of the participants provided an affirmative response.

One of our questions was whether management teams can autonomously gain access to external consultation or the participation of an external assessor. Only 42.90% of the participants responded affirmatively. We wanted to know if the teams have access to a standardized model or to program evaluation guidelines and only 30% affirmed to have assessment samples to review their program. This data shows that there is a real need for improvement in terms of training of management teams in bilingual education and evaluation. We also wanted to know if the management team could autonomously use standardized exams (Cambridge, Trinity...) to evaluate the students' progress. Most schools (70%) cannot use external agents although all the charter schools gave a positive answer.

5. DISCUSSION

Gold (2006) and Laorden and Peñafiel (2010) agree in stressing the need for the management team to have some knowledge of bilingual education in order lead the project successfully. As we have just seen, in Castile and Leon, management teams design, adapt and lead the bilingual program though most of them have no specific training in bilingual education.

The medium to low level of satisfaction with the evaluation model shown by 31 % of the subjects may be, at least partially, explained by the fact that all schools running bilingual programs must send a report to the Regional Education Department at the end of the school year. Yet such reports tend to be highly bureaucratic documents with hardly any room for qualitative assessment items in them.

Our data also show that there is room for improvement in the degree of teachers' familiarity with the curricular modifications derived from the implementation of bilingual programs. In order to work as a team it is necessary that not only specialist but also generalist teachers have a sound knowledge of the curriculum and of any statutory changes introduced and their impact on subject content and teaching strategies as well as on school organization and management issues.

Regarding human resources, the need for both language assistants and specialist teachers is a core aspect of the program that needs to be improved. One of the main concerns of the management teams running bilingual programs is how to assist students with difficulties in the subjects taught in the foreign language who are at risk of falling behind and drop out of the program. Schools should be provided with enough specialist teachers to assist these students albeit according to our data only 37.7 % of the schools count on the human resources needed for that purpose.

We also find the information regarding the teachers' level of job stability and permanence in their assigned schools extremely relevant for it determines the effectiveness of the coordination between teachers of linguistic and non-linguistic subjects and across educational stages (Mehisto, Marsh & Frigols, 2008; Pavón, Ávila, Gallego & Espejo, 2014; Durán & Beltrán, 2016). In light of the results presented in section 4.4, we can conclude that there is significant room for improvement regarding the stability of both specialist and non-specialist teachers which is of seminal importance for the successful implementation of the program.

The management team's perception of the turnover rate is important, especially in public schools, since, on a yearly basis, teachers are offered the possibility to move to a different school through a competitive process. At the same time there are many teaching positions at schools that are covered by temporary teachers due to different circumstances such as illnesses or sabbatical leaves. Our results have shown that there is a substantial number of schools with a high turnover rate of teachers and this fact complicates organizational issues such as coordination between teachers or adaptation to the school context.

As expected, our data show that non specialist teachers are not as interested as specialist teachers in participating in CPD courses aimed at fostering their knowledge of the foreign language. However, since the bilingual program is a project that has been approved by the school council we deem the school staff familiarization with the L2 important as non-linguistic subject teachers should coordinate with specialist teachers who have a better

understanding of the difficulties students face when learning in a foreign language (Mehisto et al. 2008). As bilingual programs have an impact on the school as a whole, every teacher has a certain degree of responsibility towards its success.

However, not only teachers must commit themselves to working towards success but every stakeholder must partake in this collective endeavour (Fleischmann, 2007). This is especially the case with policy makers and decision takers who should be supportive at all times (Ruiz-Garrido & Fontanet-Gómez, 2009) since they are fully responsible for the provision of school human resources as well as for designing, authorizing, managing, and financially support the CPD schemes offered to teachers.

The degree of participation of specialist teachers in CPD courses can be improved since teachers do not participate in them in large numbers. This could be due to accessibility issues for many teachers live or work far away from the premises where they take place, to the lack of financial aids or because the courses offered are of no interest to teachers (Cabezuelo & Fernández, 2014). Most teachers feel that the administration should be sensitive to their demands, which would foster their participation.

As far as management teams are concerned, their leadership is very important in terms of continuous evaluation of the program where the results of the students should also be included (Collier & Thomas, 2004). Gold (2006) highlights the importance of having management teams well trained in bilingual education, as well as the need for external agents to participate in the evaluation process. Robledo and Cortez (2002) and Villarreal (2009) also consider the educational authorities' role in designing, legislating and supervising a quality evaluation system very important and believe they should be directly involved in this process. Results show that according to the participants in the research, most management teams evaluate the bilingual project at the school (81.40%) even though less than half of the teams (48.60%) have at least one member trained in bilingual education and in the assessment of bilingual projects.

We also deem it essential for the educational authorities to become involved and ensure that school management teams have the necessary training in bilingual education or access to that training. Only 51.40% of the participants report having access to courses in monitoring and evaluating bilingual programs. This definitely needs to be improved as a prerequisite for the teams to effectively evaluate the program. Given the fact that there are so many teams lacking training in evaluation, it is interesting to note that only 42.90% of the schools can get external consultation or follow up from experts in the field to improve or adapt the program to the needs of the school. Another noteworthy piece of data which has emerged from our research is the fact that only 30% of the schools have a standardized model of evaluation. This could be a very helpful tool for the teams as it could serve as a guideline to know what and how to evaluate the program. At the same time, it could also assist the educational authorities in collecting data on those bilingual programs that are working well and throw light on the factors contributing to their success. One last result that is worth mentioning is the fact that 70% of schools are not allowed to use external examination agents to evaluate the competence of students in L2 in accordance with international standards. Collier and Thomas (2004) highlight the need to include the students' progress in the evaluation of the program.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The implementation of bilingual programs entails significant modifications in the school organization and requires the allocation of appropriate resources. The design of projects which are consonant with the vision and the mission of the schools, as they contribute to define them, and the analysis of the resources available and the conditions at work, will help their management teams set realistic goals, work from needs analyses, and establish ways of tracking progress well before the programs are launched.

It is, therefore, necessary to be thorough when deciding on the suitability of the project for each specific school setting. The training of management teams in bilingual programs and the evaluation and supervision of these programs are thus the keystone to their successful functioning. In addition to training, management teams should have more autonomy in resorting to experts in the field, external agents or educational authorities' advisors for the evaluation process to throw light on the strengths, weaknesses and areas of improvement of the programs.

And since these also affect families, the disclosure of the program and a greater contact with parents and carers to ensure their support should not be disregarded. Likewise, a greater consensus and knowledge of curricular modifications on the part of all teaching staff is also necessary.

The availability of teaching specialists to provide educational support to students who have difficulties as they advance within the bilingual program has become a priority. Greater stability and longer periods of permanence of teachers participating in the programs would guarantee their continuity and a much better coordination of the program. And the participation of teachers in CPD activities related to language and methodology will make them improve, test, and ground their teaching. And as their confidence grows they will also have better equipped and more confident pupils.

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