

Principal professional identity: Giving voice to children in a vulnerable Spanish context

Journal:	<i>Educational Management Administration & Leadership</i>
Manuscript ID	EMAL-2020-520.R4
Manuscript Type:	Original Article
Keyword:	professional identity, Leadership, Principals, Social justice
Abstract:	This case study investigated the strategies used by a school principal who successfully leads an educational centre in a vulnerable context. This article aims to explore how a school in a vulnerable context can be strengthened by the actions implemented by the principal and his leadership based on social and pedagogical commitment. Initially, the key aspects identified by the school community in the principal's identity were analysed, and subsequently compared with their own perception to understand their professional development and leadership practices. The findings identify three main strategies that have been implemented to improve the school climate: (1) Building relationships and involving the community in educational change. (2) Enhancing cooperative work and the joint vision of the school: professional learning communities. (3) Give children a voice, respect children and fight for equal opportunities. Comprehensive keys to professional practice are drawn from these findings.

SCHOLARONE™
Manuscripts

El copyright pertenece en exclusiva al editor.

Citación del artículo:

Lucena, C., Cruz-González, C., & Domingo, J. (2023). Principal professional identity: Giving voice to children in a vulnerable Spanish context. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 51(5), 1161-1180. <https://doi.org/10.1177/17411432211030750>

This is an accepted version of an article published in *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*.
The final published version is available online at: <https://doi.org/10.1177/17411432211030750>

Principal professional identity: Giving voice to children in a vulnerable Spanish context

Abstract

This case study investigated the strategies used by a school principal who successfully leads an educational centre in a vulnerable context. This article aims to explore how a school in a vulnerable context can be strengthened by the actions implemented by the principal and his leadership based on social and pedagogical commitment. Initially, the key aspects identified by the school community in the principal's identity were analysed, and subsequently compared with their own perception to understand their professional development and leadership practices. The findings identify three main strategies that have been implemented to improve the school climate: (1) Building relationships and involving the community in educational change. (2) Enhancing cooperative work and the joint vision of the school: professional learning communities. (3) Give children a voice, respect children and fight for equal opportunities. Comprehensive keys to professional practice are drawn from these findings.

Keywords: identity; educational leadership; principals; student success; social justice

Introduction

Various studies at the international level have indicated the critical importance of school leadership in educational improvement (Hallinger and Heck, 2010; Harris and Jones, 2019). In this paper, we describe the case of an educational centre of special vulnerability, which was been transformed into a reference centre of educational excellence thanks to the leadership developed by the principal and his professional team.

The essence of this transformation, as we will discuss in later sections, was born from giving a voice to the students of the educational centre. For this reason, in order to explore this case study, we delved into the analysis of the professional identity of the principal and his professional team for the performance of educational leadership in a vulnerable school. Based on authors such as Sugrue (2005) and Robertson (2017), the leadership identity of educational professionals, especially school principals, goes beyond the observations of what they do, and above all, they focus on the study of how they think and feel, and what they believe. Hence, the importance of the identity approach.

From this approach, according to Dubar (2000), identity can be defined as the result of personal interactions and the social, cultural and organisational context. This means that identity cannot be separated from personal relationships and environment, which are always subject to the influence of historical and cultural factors (Trede, Macklin and Bridges, 2012; Wenger, 1998). In this sense, identity development involves a dual process: identity for oneself and identity for others (Dubar, 2000; Ricoeur, 1996), as relevant authors in this field of study state, it is a subjective concept (Court, 2005), which is in constant social interaction, which enhances a sense of dependence and belonging to social groups (Bolivar, 2006). Based on the theoretical

1
2
3 approach of Leadership identity construction theory (DeRue and Ashford, 2010), a school leader
4 constructs his or her identity through a process where he or she seeks and negotiates his or her
5 own self both for himself or herself and for others. For this reason, we justify that in the study of
6 leadership in schools, professional identity deserves special consideration.
7

8
9 **Leading under the particular approach of educational inclusion through the empowerment of**
10 **students is one of the main essences of this study.** In particular, this approach is committed
11 to a horizontal school organizational structure in which students play a key role. In this
12 way, the transformation towards a better school is only possible through their critical,
13 reflexive, and participative spirit (Fielding, 2004; Rudduck and Flutter (2007)).
14 Accordingly, the values that support the basic pillars of the school must be felt and
15 internalized by the various members of the educational community, and this can only be
16 made possible through social involvement and collaboration in their establishment
17 (Hoffman- Kipp, Artiles and López-Torres, 2003).
18
19
20

21 Husu and Tirri (2007) argue that schools could be considered as communities in which
22 educational practices ferment from the common thoughts and ideals of teachers,
23 contributing to their social and community implications. Thus, the school becomes a
24 professional learning community, where professionals in the centre support each other
25 and sustain the creation of innovative ideas. However, the achievement of a true
26 professional learning community is determined by the professional context in which
27 teachers work (Stoll et al., 2006). The identification or (dis)identification of educational
28 professionals with their professional context is a key aspect. Thus, a supportive and safe
29 school will foster greater social and pedagogical commitment on the part of the teaching
30 team (Shulman and Shulman, 2004).
31
32
33
34

35 Within this framework, a figure of special relevance emerges when it comes to
36 coordinating and energizing professional groups within the educational community. The
37 principal is a key figure in ensuring that the professional team is guided towards ways
38 of working based on shared leadership and joint commitment and support (Cruz-
39 González, Lucena and Domingo, 2020). Research has indicated that this type of
40 leadership contributes to a positive school climate (Bosker et al., 2000) and greater
41 professional and job satisfaction for teachers (Griffith, 2004; Hallinger and Heck,
42 1998). Consequently, this research presents a real case of transformational leadership
43 through the figure of the school principal and his professional team, who believed that
44 the greatest driving force for change was the students themselves.
45
46
47
48

49 **Transformational leadership as a driver of change in vulnerable contexts**

50
51 School and society are intimately connected. For this reason, in social contexts with
52 special vulnerability, there is an even greater need for a school with a more just and
53 equitable vision, transforming this into priority elements for action for achieving
54 educational success. One of the keys to school leadership concerns its horizontal
55 structural organization, distributed between all members of the educational community
56 (Elmore, 2000). As advocated by Day et al. (2010), the development of this leadership
57 requires a common vision that is shared by the professional team regarding the goals of
58
59
60

1
2
3 the school. With this approach, school leadership aims to transform professional
4 practices through a collaborative and pedagogical professional culture. Several authors
5 attribute the term "transformational leadership" to this approach, emphasizing the
6 process that seeks to achieve a professional culture based on values of dialogue,
7 commitment, mutual support, and empathy (Day, 2000; Ninković and Knežević Florić,
8 2016). This type of leadership serves as an enabler for the development of practices that
9 achieve a truly democratic sense of school (Marshall & Olivia, 2010). In this sense,
10 research also points to the importance of sustainable leadership which strives for
11 collective and activist engagement, building a diverse school climate that promotes
12 innovative ideas and successful educational practices from a learning communities
13 approach (Hargreaves & Fink, 2012).

14
15
16
17
18
19 Contexts of special vulnerability are understood as those that, due to various
20 circumstances (including context, location, and socio-economic level), are in a
21 disadvantaged situation that directly or indirectly influences the quality of education and
22 learning of students. Specifically, in the Spanish context, these educational centres are
23 classified as challenging contexts with performance difficulties. The characteristics of
24 these types of centres often stem from the scarcity (or even absence) of certain
25 favourable conditions at home, including appropriate nutrition, healthcare, and parental
26 support. Several studies highlight the importance of educational leadership and
27 professional support and commitment in this type of context (Wahlstrom & Louis, 2008;
28 Copland & Boatright, 2004). In fact, authors such as Fullan (2001) argue that leading in
29 a committed way in a challenging context has effects on different dimensions of the
30 centre such as the morality and professionalism of the teaching staff and the educational
31 outcomes of the student. Hence, the figure of a good leader in a disadvantaged context
32 is essential. Portelli and McMahon (2004) emphasize that in this case, a good leader
33 must have a great critical and social conscience in the face of inequalities, using
34 diversity as an opportunity and not as a restriction. Furthermore, they must walk
35 together with their professional team to achieve an education for all and among all, for
36 which collaboration and professional involvement are key. Similarly, in Rudduck's
37 research (2007), the school encourages the participation of everyone in the improvement
38 process, particularly the students. It would be a matter of giving them a voice so that
39 they participate in the daily management of the centre, and that they are able to choose
40 what and when to learn, whilst playing an active role in their own learning.

41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49 Constructing a leadership identity in challenging contexts has been the focus of analysis
50 in several studies (Cruz-González, Pérez and Domingo, 2020; Jo, 2014; Nickens and
51 Washington, 2016). In fact, authors such as Spies and Heystek (2016) explain that in
52 order to achieve a consolidated identity in difficult contexts, it is necessary to have an
53 educational community that shares common visions of work and educational goals. Jo
54 (2014) agrees on this and highlights the importance of a professional culture based on
55 teamwork principles. Therefore, professional ways of working, professional
56 expectations and professional support are crucial elements for the development of
57 successful educational practices in a plural and diverse context. This is argued by
58
59
60

1
2
3 Carpenter et al. (2015), indicating that leaders who work in challenging contexts must
4 be updated on the new social realities and adapt their educational practices and
5 strategies to the educational environment. It could be said, therefore, that this leadership
6 provides the educational community, and particularly the students, with an adapted and
7 safe environment, which would serve as a source of support for dealing with the
8 academic and emotional challenges of the school (Elmore, 2000).
9
10

11 **Purpose of this study**

12
13
14 By focusing our analysis on the importance of the principal for educational success in a
15 difficult context, our study aims to evaluate the visions and perceptions held by the rest
16 of the educational community regarding a leading principal who has achieved
17 educational success in a particularly difficult context. Analysing the professional
18 identity of leadership of this principal and exploring the meanings that the rest of the
19 community attributes to him, could be useful to guide the professional practice in these
20 types of contexts.
21
22

23
24 This study is part of two main research projects. The first of these is the ISSPP, an
25 International Project of Successful School Principals, which includes the analysis of
26 different cases at an international level about schools that have achieved educational
27 success. The second of these is the National Research, Development and Innovation
28 (R+D+i) Project, 'Identity of school management: Leadership, training and
29 professionalization'. Based on these projects, our study aims to examine the construction
30 of the professional identity of the principal working in this school. In particular, we will
31 place special emphasis on the vision that the rest of the educational community has of
32 him along with identifying the most significant professional and identity values that
33 form the basis of his work (Ritacco and Bolívar, 2018). In this regard, the main
34 objectives of this study are as follows:
35
36
37
38

- 39 • To analyse the characteristics of the professional identity of the principal as a
40 school leader in his school community.
- 41 • To study the strategies and initiatives carried out in the centre for the
42 achievement of successful leadership in a vulnerable context.
- 43 • To extract comprehensive keys for professional practice
44
45
46

47 **The study context: School and community**

48
49 The educational centre analysed in this study is located in a rural village in Granada.
50 The context surrounding the municipality is vulnerable, with a population of low
51 socioeconomic level and families with economic problems and a high incidence of
52 unemployment. There is only one educational centre in this municipality with about 300
53 pupils, which teaches pre-school, primary and the first two years of secondary
54 education, i.e., children from 3 to 13 years of age. Many of the students who attend the
55 school are covered by aid plans offered by the autonomous community of Andalusia
56 due to the scarce social and economic resources of their families.
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 Despite the difficult circumstances of the school, it is a centre that stands out
4 educationally, achieving outcomes that are above the average of other schools in the
5 same contextual circumstances, particularly after the appointment of the principal
6 analysed in this work. Before the transformational leadership and educational practices
7 of the analysed principal were out in place, the school had not achieved these academic
8 results. This improvement in educational results is recorded by the Andalusian Agency
9 for Educational Evaluation (AGAEVE), which evaluates schools on an annual basis. In
10 addition, the school has become a national reference centre, which is reflected in the
11 numbers of awards it has received, along with the press releases that have appeared in
12 newspapers and on television. We also note that the school is endorsed by the
13 educational association Francesco Tonucci and promotes a model of school coexistence
14 based on interpersonal relationships and emotional intelligence. Finally, the leadership
15 style of the principal is one that promotes the involvement of the entire community and
16 the municipality in the education of its children. In this way, collective and community
17 activities are promoted from the school, the city hall, and local businesses.

23 **Methods**

24
25
26 This research was conducted through a case study (Stake, 2005), and using a qualitative
27 methodology from an interpretative paradigm (Charmaz, 2004). Our aim was to study
28 the professional identity of this principal, delving deeper into his educational strategies
29 for success and inter-professional relations with the rest of the community. This case
30 study explored the educational practices carried out by the school principal and his team
31 and analysed the perceptions that the educational community held about the leadership
32 identity of the school principal. This type of methodology allowed us to examine, in an
33 integral way, the pillars that constitute the professional culture of the educational centre,
34 along with the professional values of the team led by the principal.

38 **Selection of the case study**

39
40
41 This research is part of two larger research projects: ISSPP and National R+D+i Project.
42 For this reason, our choice of case study is justified by the selection criteria of these two
43 projects. Thus, the school where Alberto works as principal is characterised by being a
44 school of difficult performance, which presents educational results above the expected
45 ones (based on its Socio-Economic and Cultural Index).

46
47
48 Within the Spanish educational context, and specifically in the autonomous community
49 of Andalusia, this type of school is classified as a difficult performing school (Official
50 Bulletin of the Andalusian Regional Government, Number 219, 13/11/2019). Another
51 peculiarity to highlight is that these types of centres are always voluntary. This means
52 that you can only work in them if you expressly request it. This, moreover, adds a
53 special value to this research, since the professionals who constitute this educational
54 centre, including the Principal himself, are people with a vocation and enthusiasm for
55 building the foundations of a better education in an educational centre such as the one in
56 which this study is framed.

Furthermore, and referring to another of the selection criteria of the projects that form part of this research, Alberto is considered by both his professional peers and the rest of the educational community as a successful pedagogical leader (Day, 2005).

Data collection

Information was collected using in-depth biographical and semi-structured interviews between 60 and 90 minutes in duration, participant observation, and documentary analysis. This process took place between 2018-2020 and a mixed approach was used (Creswell and Clark, 2011). Information collected through participant observation was captured in a logbook (Punch, 2012). In this notebook we collected all the impressions, feelings and relevant data that could trace a social cartography of the context surrounding the case study. The documentary analysis was based on different documentary registers and institutional writings of the centre.

Biographical interviews (Hopf, 2004; Fischer-Rosenthal and Rosenthal, 1997) were conducted with the school principal in order to access his life history and explore the personal, contextual, professional and/or circumstantial factors that shaped his identity as a pedagogical leader.

In addition, semi-structured interviews were conducted with various members of the educational community that constituted the school. Table 1 shows the various participants of the research.

Interview type	Main topics of the interviews	Number of interviews	Participants
In-depth biographical	History and biography of the principal Personal characteristics, professional values, and motivation Visions and goals Leadership role Initiatives carried out in the centre for educational improvement Challenges encountered in school management since being appointed Strategies used to respond to educational challenges	8	1 Principal
Semi-structured interviews	Characteristics and identity traits that define the principal as a leader Initiatives developed by the principal and management team to achieve school improvement Leadership strategies developed in the school to respond to problem situations	2/3 to each participant	5 Family members 10 Students 10 Teachers 1 Therapeutic Pedagogy teacher (TP teacher) 1 Secretary 1 Councillor 1 Service staff 1 Councillor for Education and

	Culture
	1 Guadalinfo*
	(digital literacy initiative)
	representative
	1 Inspector

* Guadalinfo is the Andalusian public network of digital competence centres, open innovation, and Internet access, whose focus is to empower people (using ICT as a tool) to be the engine of transformation of their communities.

Table 1. Participants in our case study and type of interview developed with each one
Source: Prepared by the authors

Table 1 illustrate that a number of key informants were purposively selected. Among those interviewed, we highlight families and students. In reference to the families, the voices of 5 representatives of the AMPA (association of parents and students of the school) were collected. As for the pupils, 10 pupils were finally interviewed. This number corresponds to ten representatives of the classes taught at the school (from 4 to 13 years of age).

The main objective of the semi-structured interviews with the different sectors of the school was to study the views and perspectives they showed towards the successful educational practices implemented with the arrival of the new principal, and how they defined their professional identity.

In addition, participant observation and documentary analysis were carried out throughout the two-year fieldwork period. During this time, notes were taken in the "logbook" on the various significant verbal and non-verbal elements that emerged (Punch, 2012). Furthermore, we also recorded the impressions, sensations and intuitions following the interviews and conversations with the members under study. This was extremely useful as a complementary way of gathering information that is difficult to collect through dialogue, but can be perceived through participant observation.

Data analysis

The process of data collection and analysis was carried out using reflective deepening cascades (Kelchtermans, 1993, 2016). In this way, the interviews were carried out progressively in order to reach a better understanding and to validate the information collected by the informants themselves. To this end, at the end of each interview, we analysed the information collected and later, in the next meeting, we delivered a conceptual map with the main ideas expressed so that the informants themselves could validate our analysis of the discourse. This also served to introduce the topic to be discussed in the subsequent interview. Further, the observations recorded in the "logbook" provided a potential means of triangulating the information collected in the semi-structured interviews (Bolívar, Fernández and Molina, 2005). For this purpose, we considered the voice of all members of the educational community who could provide us with meaningful information.

1
2
3 When all the interviews were done and we had completed our logbook, we dumped the
4 data into the qualitative analysis software Nvivo 12. The observational records were
5 introduced into the program through "memos" that complemented the discourses
6 collected during sequential interviews. This analytical process was based on basic
7 principles of grounded theory (Strauss and Corbin, 1998), in which the priorities and
8 significant issues of the participants emerged from their own discourse.
9

11 **Findings**

12
13
14 In this section we present the results of our study. From the participants' narratives we
15 identify the main identity characteristics presented by the principal Alberto as the leader
16 of the educational centre. We focus on the perceptions of the principal himself and those
17 of the external agents, based on Dubar's (2000) definition of identity for oneself and
18 identity for others. Finally, we identify the strategies that the principal employs to
19 achieve successful leadership in the challenging context that surrounds him.
20
21

22 **Personal and professional background of the Principal**

23
24
25 Alberto was born in 1978 into a family of lawyers and was raised by his grandmother
26 during his early years. His school life was characterised by a traditional educational
27 system which has resulted in bad school experiences mainly due to his worries and
28 impatience. He began his university experience at the law school, following the
29 tradition of his family, but very soon he became aware of his true vocation, to help
30 others from an educational point of view. He then began his educational career,
31 combining this with volunteer work with people at social risk and of high vulnerability.
32 In the faculty of educational sciences, he encountered a new world, a teacher crosses his
33 path, believing in his potential, and he falls in love with books and methodology, guided
34 by his new friend, Francesco Tonucci. At the end of his university years, he passed the
35 competitive examinations and secured a teaching contract. He then began his journey
36 that took him from one educational centre to another. The first destination (a rural
37 context with a very low ratio) allowed him to start using innovative and project-based
38 methodologies. Other schools he passed through as a teacher and which use project-
39 based methodologies encouraged him to continue on this path. Finally, in 2008, he
40 arrived at his current centre, a school with considerable socio-economic needs and
41 rooted in traditional methodologies. His mission at that time was to change the school's
42 vision towards an educational model of quality and equity. For him, respect for children
43 must be at the core, taking into account their time and interests. In 2016, he decided to
44 become the school's principal, because he realized that being a principal and a
45 pedagogical leader allows him to more easily reach all his students, his classmates and
46 the entire educational community. From here, with the implementation of globalised,
47 active, and emotional methodologies, the school saw significant improvements in the
48 educational and emotional outcomes of its students, whilst achieving recognition in the
49 form of numerous national and international awards.
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58

59 **Characteristics of Principal Alberto's identity as a school leader**

1
2
3 Through an extensive process of interviews and participant observation at the school,
4 we were able to have contact with various agents and members of the educational
5 community. For all the interviewees, the principal is a person who is well prepared on a
6 human and professional level to exercise his leadership role in a vulnerable centre. They
7 also stated that the principal has a clear purpose, and all his actions revolve around this
8 purpose, that is, to transform and improve the school and the surrounding municipality
9 by taking into account the voice of the whole community, and specifically that of the
10 child. This was observed throughout the research process. It could be observed how the
11 children on the basis of their autonomous sharing and the ease with which they were
12 able to decide on classroom and centre matters. According to his colleagues that we
13 interviewed, the principal also has a high capacity to empathize with people. This
14 capacity allows him to be a person who knows how to listen and transmit his opinions
15 to others. The school councillor defines him as a good leader with communication
16 skills.

17
18 For the service staff interviewed in this study, Alberto gives them the confidence to be
19 able to express their concerns and needs. In a similar vein, for Teacher 2, Alberto is a
20 pedagogical and affective leader. She states that people define him as a "priest"¹,
21 because he is the person to whom everyone goes to for confession.

22
23 According to the families interviewed, Alberto has become an essential part of the
24 centre. This was expressed in their words, but also in their non-verbal language. Their
25 expressions of joy and enthusiasm for the new educational approach of the centre were
26 palpable in the atmosphere in all our research stays. They have noticed a significant
27 change in the last few years since Alberto became the principal. "Now he leaves the
28 doors of the school open, and for any doubt or problem, he is always available". For
29 Mother 1 the most important thing is that Alberto transmits happiness to their children,
30 since he makes them want to go to school every day because he offers them security and
31 have total confidence in telling him anything that happens to them. The participating
32 students, for their part, defined him as a trustworthy person to whom they can tell all
33 their secrets. They respect and admire him at the same time.

34
35
36 "Alberto is good to us, he always asks us how we are and if we need something,
37 he helps us" (student 4)

38
39 "Alberto is more than a principal, because he is like a mother who shelters you
40 and helps you. With him, school is also my home" (Student 6).

41
42 The narrative of our informants also reveals how there is a critical point of inflection in
43 the principal's professional practice. For all the interviewees, the principal projects an
44 image of identity that is more strongly connected to the teaching role than that of the

45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
¹ The word "priest" is used by the informant as a metaphor. When a religious person goes to church, he/she can confess all their sins to the priest, and they receive God's forgiveness. This role, therefore, is attributed to Alberto because he is a trustworthy person who one can go to when faced with any problem or need.

1
2
3 administrator. For Alberto, this means an internal struggle of identity duality (teacher-
4 principal).

5
6 “I think it is hard for Alberto not to dedicate himself fully to teaching, his role as
7 a teacher is very present, but it is clear to him that from above (management) he
8 can help classroom teachers transform themselves and fulfil their work duties”
9 (Teacher 1)
10
11

12 The school community defines Alberto as a person with the capacities and aptitudes
13 required to successfully lead a school. He has clear ideas of educational improvement
14 and fights for them. He is a hard-working person who knows how to listen to others in
15 order to identify their needs and to empathize with them, thus providing them with the
16 necessary support. These perceptions held by the school community are shared by the
17 principal himself, that is, he perceives himself as he is perceived by others.
18
19

20
21 “I consider myself a pedagogical leader committed to society who wants a
22 change in the school and who starts from the fact that the most important thing is
23 the children. I have decided to be a principal so that I can influence everyone in
24 my educational team, but it is also true that I would like to spend more time in
25 the classroom. Moreover, I always try to listen to everyone and respect their
26 opinions, and then give my view before reaching a consensus. I always put
27 myself in the other person's place, whether it is a parent, a student or a
28 colleague” (Principal).
29
30
31
32

33 **Educational practices carried out at the centre for successful leadership in a** 34 **vulnerable context**

35 **A) Empowering relationships and involving the community in educational change**

36
37 The principal aims to achieve an educational change in his school that is for everyone
38 and between everyone. He is a socially committed leader who works for, from, and in
39 social justice. He believes that social justice goes beyond the equitable distribution of
40 goods and understands it as the representation of all individuals and their opportunity to
41 be included in society. He explains that at present, discrimination exists for a multitude
42 of reasons, including gender, ethnicity, culture, ability, and sexual orientation, and that
43 the school has a fundamental role to play in reducing these social inequalities. For this
44 reason, Alberto promotes collaboration and continuous interrelations between school,
45 families and the municipality, since for him this symbiosis makes it easier to fight for
46 inequalities and offers the opportunity to educate children together. Alberto aims to
47 involve the whole community by raising awareness of the need for educational and
48 social commitment. He is guiding people in a depressed context, so that they have the
49 necessary skills to enable the municipality to prosper and to live in harmony.
50
51
52
53
54
55

56 To achieve this proposed goal, the principal encourages the establishment of
57 relationships both within and outside the school community. In this sense, the
58
59
60

1
2
3 interviewees have informed us about the process of fostering school-municipality
4 relationships.
5

6 “The school has been completely open to the citizens, whereas before the school
7 and the local council worked separately. But now it is joint and collaborative
8 work. The pupils come to the town hall naturally and propose activities, and we
9 also go to the centre and so all year round, at the level of culture, education,
10 health, and sport, we touch on all areas and work on them together. We
11 implement a model in which we involve all the institutions. This means that we
12 all come together and work along the same lines” (Councillor for Education).
13
14

15
16 “Since Alberto became principal, barriers have been broken down and we are
17 looking for points of collaboration. The children go out two days a week during
18 school hours to have their classes in the Guadalinfo center. This is a very
19 powerful union, a very unusual case. He is very keen for me to join in with the
20 school, to work in collaboration with them and for the children to come
21 here...and he has a very clear idea of how he wants to transform the society of
22 this municipality (Representative of the Guadalinfo centre)
23
24
25

26
27 Therefore, the Guadalinfo centre, apart from allowing the children to continue learning
28 and developing their technological capacities, offers its resources to the school. For
29 example, it allows the centre to use the 3D printer in its facilities, that is, for the
30 children to use along with their teachers. All this has been possible due to the good
31 relations that the principal has established with the rest of the community and the
32 municipality. This model, which involves the entire community in the teaching-learning
33 process, encourages families to be motivated, open and participatory. This is
34 particularly true in disadvantaged contexts where expectations are low. The families
35 themselves and their colleagues inform us of the change they have noticed in the school
36 in recent years; they perceive how the doors are always open for resolving any questions
37 and problems, and how the principal is always available.
38
39
40

41
42 “Alberto's office is always open to students, parents, and the entire community.
43 No parent can say that the principal's door has been closed at any time and for
44 any problem he/she may have. I think that if a principal is not 100% available to
45 the educational community, he is wasting his time in a centre” (TP teacher).
46
47

48 This fact indicates the principal's social commitment, but also shows how this has been
49 transmitted to his team. Specifically, the principal intentionally seeks to ensure the
50 wellbeing of the general community over that of the individual. For the inspector, the
51 team in general has a very positive attitude. They do overtime if they have to, and the
52 teachers are very much involved in the school. This is reflected in both the results
53 obtained by the school and the well-being of the community.
54
55

56 **B) Promoting cooperative work and the common vision of the school**

57
58
59
60

1
2
3 The principal has a clear vision of the school and wants the whole community to unite
4 and walk in the same direction (Teacher 2). He starts from the premise that everyone —
5 individually and collectively — has something to contribute. For him, each teacher has
6 "a kind of superpower" that makes them work cooperatively to complement one another
7 (Teacher 1). For this reason, the principal establishes roles and functions for the
8 different teachers in order to ensure that all are motivated in their roles and can be
9 receptive to following the line of work that has been mapped out.
10
11
12

13 "Since the arrival of the principal, every year, when distributing the courses, we
14 analyse the profile of each teacher, that is to say, we try to place a person who
15 adopts a more innovative methodological approach with another person who
16 uses a more traditional methodology in the same course in order to achieve a
17 balance and to ensure that they inspire each other. Or, for example, if we have a
18 specialist in social sciences, he continues to teach that subject throughout the
19 whole year. In this way, it is easier to establish the methodological approach that
20 will be maintained throughout a particular course" (TP teacher).
21
22
23

24 Alberto has restructured the school, promoting collaborative and collective work among
25 teachers, in order to improve educational practices, which has had an impact on the
26 teaching-learning process.
27
28

29 "In this centre, the principal has strengthened the professional learning
30 communities, allowing us to all learn from each other, whilst each teacher feels
31 more committed to achieving the proposed goals" (School councillor).
32
33

34 Motivating teachers to work along the same lines and to fulfil certain common
35 purposes requires the principal to have a profound knowledge of people and the activity
36 to be carried out. In this sense, Teacher 2 speaks of the great capacity that Alberto has to
37 know the people around him, identifying their strengths and weaknesses, while at the
38 same time understanding the methods he uses.
39
40

41 In addition, for the principal, the most important aspect is to delegate functions to his
42 management team, exercise shared leadership to dilute the workload, and make
43 everyone feel involved and a necessary part of the changes. In the school, all decisions
44 are made in a consensual manner and everyone has something to contribute. The
45 interviewees speak of the good relationships, explaining that they routinely meet every
46 week to talk about how the week has gone and if any kind of problem has arisen or how
47 it can be solved. They give each other their insights and reach agreements.
48
49

50 Finally, the participants detect a barrier that the principal faces in his quest to implement
51 changes in their school. There are people who do not want to change because it is
52 represents an extra effort that they are sometimes not willing to make (School
53 councillor). Generating a change in a teacher's educational path means beginning to
54 train and rethink their schedules and plans. But the principal, together with his or her
55 team, makes the teachers aware of this, and this is spread by observing good practices
56 and good school results.
57
58
59
60

C) Give children a voice, respect children, and promote equal opportunities

The school's focus is on the children. The child is always the priority, above parents, colleagues and everyone else, according to Teacher 1. Alberto is very clear about this and his enthusiasm infects us all with respect to this vision of respect for children and for "making" children happy (Teacher 2). For the principal, the rights of the child must be strictly respected, and he argues that the school is precisely the place to ensure that such rights are upheld.

Both the principal and the rest of the school management team always think of the student. They do not focus exclusively on what they learn, but they instead emphasize the importance of acquiring human values and channelling their emotions. They are concerned about their future and their well-being. The most important thing for the principal is that all the children manage to reach the goals that are within their capabilities. This is even more important in a school in a vulnerable context with low expectations on the part of the families and the students themselves (Service staff)

The principal, as well as arguing that all teachers have something to contribute, applies this logic to the students. Each child is unique and has strengths that should be recognized and reinforced. This is why he advocates a project-based methodology in which children become the protagonists of their own learning. Through this methodology, children are active, work autonomously, and are able to organize and plan their own tasks. Together with his team, the principal has managed to improve the teaching-learning process and to contribute towards the children being valued and their voices being heard. "The idea is to get the children to be heard. We encourage them to think and be reflective, thus contributing to the growth of the school" (School councillor).

Incorporating this method of teaching has an impact on the learning process and this is reflected in the good results of the students. "We are above average compared to other schools working under similar conditions in Andalusia" (Teacher 3). This is also reflected in the happiness of the students (Teacher 1). They are aware that Alberto fights for them and respects them and this attitude is reciprocal. Teacher 3 explains that the relationship between the principal and the students is excellent and not only on a curricular level (in terms of content and learning), but also on an emotional level. This fact was observed by the researchers when the children went to the principal very happily to discuss their exploits, their problems and achievements.

"When something bad happens to you, the principal helps you, and when something good happens to you, he helps you to celebrate it. My son has always described Alberto in this way" (Mother 1)

In the same vein, the participants report that the principal visits the classrooms whenever there is time, in order to ask how the children are doing.

1
2
3 “Or, for example, he goes to the class to say that the school has been given 500
4 euros in subsidies and the children are going to manage them. And also, when
5 we do a project, he goes to say that we have done very well (Teacher 1)
6
7

8 "We decide in a children's assembly what we spend the money on, we get
9 together as class delegates and ask all our classmates what they want to spend
10 the money on. For example, last year we decided to spend the money on a
11 fountain for the playground" (Student 9).
12

13
14 "We love to have assemblies to decide on our interests" (Student 8).
15

16 As well, the principal himself tells us how the professional practices developed in the
17 school have to be adapted to the needs of the students and particularly those difficulties
18 that are associated with a disadvantaged context. For Alberto, agreeing with his
19 colleagues, the hardest part is the attempt to alleviate inequalities and compensate in
20 some way for the disadvantages conferred upon students by their socioeconomic
21 situation. "The mission is that all children, despite their family circumstances, can have
22 the same opportunities and be able to "become what they want to be" (Principal).
23
24
25

26 "We try to compensate for the difficulties faced by the students, particularly
27 family problems. For example, children who are not used to going to the
28 cinema, going to the museum or having a table to study at home. Thus, we have
29 established support spaces in the afternoons so that they can come and have a
30 place to feel safe" (Principal).
31
32

33
34 "There are days when you say I'm going home, but I don't even know what this
35 kid is going to eat. So of course, in the end, it's the hardest part of the
36 management and you can't see it. It's very hard for a family to tell you that they
37 don't have enough to eat. And although it's true that the SYGA plan exists (a
38 support plan that is available to low-income families) it doesn't reach all of those
39 families. From school, we try to compensate and alleviate the inequalities by
40 offering breakfast, lunch, and snacks" (Principal).
41
42
43

44 Discussion

45
46 This study analyses the professional leadership identity of a principal, who, with his
47 arrival at the school, has transformed a vulnerable school context into one full of
48 opportunities and challenges. In this section we discuss the findings gathered, along
49 with other relevant research in the field of studying the professional identity of
50 leadership and school improvement in particularly difficult contexts. The success of a
51 school that serves children from pre-school to secondary school in a vulnerable context
52 with scarce resources is one of the most significant features of this case study. This, in
53 fact, is a rare occurrence in schools working under such circumstances. Therefore,
54 documenting this school case in which good results are obtained allows us to recognize
55 that it is possible to achieve success in disadvantaged contexts, through certain
56 strategies and initiatives developed by the management team, and specifically through
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 the good professional practice of the principal who acts as the school leader. This
4 educational success does not come from a single actor but is instead a challenge
5 assumed by a group of professionals who, with their dedication and commitment, have
6 helped to create a better school.
7
8

9 Our first purpose was to investigate the professional identity of Alberto, the principal of
10 the school under study. The findings revealed that his professional identity presented
11 values of professional commitment, horizontality and social justice to achieve school
12 improvement in his school. Other studies with similar purposes had results of interest
13 and in line with ours. For example, with the study by Mullen and Patrick (2000), in
14 which a principal through his successful leadership practices manages to reform and
15 improve an at-risk urban primary school. This school presented similar difficulties to
16 those we found in our research. It was characterised by low expectations of students and
17 families for their children's education, high unemployment and domestic violence.
18 Studies also highlight the importance of a school principal who bases his or her
19 professional practice on principles of social justice, collaboration and democracy (Cruz-
20 González, Pérez and Domingo, 2020).
21
22
23
24
25

26 As for the approach to the study of identity in our manuscript, it is in line with the
27 thoughts of Dubar (2000), who points out that the identity perceived by oneself cannot
28 be dissociated from the society of which it is a part and therefore will be determined by
29 the view of the agents who surround it, that is, "the others" in their daily work.
30 Moreover, this identity is in continuous change and is understood, as Robertson (2017:
31 786) added, 'as a result of learning processes and reflections about oneself'. From this
32 author's point of view, it is worth highlighting that in this process of identity
33 construction, emotional management, decision-making and interpersonal relationships
34 are of great value. In the present study, both perceptions have been taken into
35 consideration (of the principal himself and that of the others) to obtain a complete view
36 of the identity of the principal and to understand how he behaves during the course of
37 his professional practice. This sequential process of identity construction marked by key
38 events, critical incidents and interpersonal relationships has also been considered. The
39 results reveal how the principal, in the eyes of the informants, is highly trained for his
40 duties as a principal, based on the power of communication and the capacity of
41 empathy. Following his appointment, he restructured the school organization by
42 adopting a horizontal approach that is, involving everyone, leading with others and not
43 over others. According to his professional colleagues, this marked a point of inflection
44 and an increase of his self-concept and self-confidence (Leithwood, Day et al., 2006).
45
46
47
48
49
50
51

52 Our second purpose was to study the strategies and initiatives carried out in the school
53 to achieve successful educational leadership in a vulnerable school. The findings
54 explain that Principal Alberto was characterised by the development of educational
55 practices oriented towards pedagogical and inclusive purposes. From his role he sought
56 to project his own values of commitment to social justice and horizontality in his
57 school. For Hallinger (2011), this approach is an indispensable requirement for the
58 development of leadership for learning. In turn, the principal of this centre is perceived
59
60

1
2
3 as a support figure who provides security and shelter to all members of the school
4 community. This observation is in line with the proposal put forward by Robertson
5 (2017), who argues that effective leadership requires an organizational structure that
6 provides a safe school climate and fosters a positive environment.
7
8

9
10 The principal and his team have been adapting to the different circumstances and needs
11 of the school by developing professional practices that consider the vulnerable context
12 that surrounds the school. In reference to this, authors such as Carpenter et al. (2015)
13 argue that educational leaders who carry out their work in difficult contexts should
14 employ analytical strategies with respect to their school environment and involve
15 students through initiatives adapted to their social and educational needs. At the same
16 time, as Hallinger (2011) argues, it is necessary to spend time analysing and
17 contextualizing the educational environment before developing strategies and initiatives
18 aimed at school improvement. For this reason, the leadership developed by our
19 principal tries to minimize, through his actions and management strategies, the
20 inequalities and inequities that his school may present, improving and adapting the
21 conditions for teaching and learning to the needs of his own students (Robinson, 2011).
22
23
24
25

26 As our results show, the appointment of the principal as an educational manager of the
27 centre marked a before and after in the progress of the school towards educational
28 improvement. In this sense, we are speaking of transformative leadership (Ninković and
29 Knežević Florić, 2016) based on professional principles of dialogue, mutual support,
30 professional commitment, and empathy. With his arrival, the principal oversaw an
31 improvement in the school in which the students played a major role, and for this,
32 giving voice to the students was essential. Authors such as Rudduck (2007) and
33 Fielding (2004) agree that this approach is necessary to achieve educational
34 improvement, since they reported that involving the students in their teaching-learning
35 process promoted a greater bond and commitment of the students towards the
36 educational centre. In contexts of particular vulnerability, such as the one presented
37 here, this becomes even more necessary. For this reason, this article highlights the value
38 of giving a leading role to these "forgotten" groups by making them participants in their
39 own teaching-learning process through granting autonomy and offering globalised
40 methods, coinciding with the studies of Tonucci (2015) and Rudduck (2007).
41
42
43
44
45
46

47 Moreover, the results show us how the principal, during his adaptation to the
48 environment, presents a high degree of social commitment in the fight to enable the
49 school to work for social justice. In particular, he created an environment in which all
50 people are involved and represented, particularly those groups that had been socially
51 excluded. These results are in line with the reflections of Murillo and Hernández-
52 Castilla (2014) and Young (2011) who argue the need to fight and lead for social
53 justice. From this premise, the principal has adopted a strategy of promoting the
54 creation of professional learning communities (Bolam et al., 2005), thus encouraging an
55 ongoing collaboration between the school, the families, and the
56 community/municipality.
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 In the struggle to promote cooperative work and a shared vision within the school, the
4 principal has established lines of action to encourage the spread of this common vision
5 based on social commitment and the importance of respect for children. These
6 initiatives, which emerge from the interviews, and which are associated with defining a
7 vision and direction, empowering teachers and building relationships both within and
8 outside the community, are in accord with the key dimensions for successful leadership
9 defined by Day et al. (2010). Furthermore, we have been able to identify strategies used
10 by the principal to involve others in decision making, as shown, for example with
11 meetings where decisions are made by consensus, or by voting or delegating functions
12 to other team members. These characteristics are associated with shared leadership
13 practices (Gronn, 2009; Harris & Jones, 2019). Finally, our findings have revealed the
14 principal's fight for children to be respect, that is, to give them all the attention and to
15 respect their learning times, in line with the thoughts of Tonucci (2015) & Rudduck and
16 McIntyre (2007). To this end, a project-based methodology has been established in the
17 school, which encourages autonomous student work, movement, participation and
18 activity. This strategy is designed to empower the students and thus enhance the
19 expectations of the families and the students themselves, expanding their social capital.

26 **Limitations and suggestions for future research and professional practice**

28 This study presents a unique case of a school that, in the face of adverse circumstances,
29 achieved educational success based on principles of equality and social justice. Whilst
30 qualitative and more human and social research brings with it a number of potentials,
31 there are also limitations to this approach. For example, whilst case studies are a useful
32 methodology for conducting research on professional identity and school leadership,
33 their findings cannot be generalized or compared with other contexts or realities
34 (Denzin, 2009). The results reported refer to the unique reality faced by a particular
35 school. The reason for choosing this case was that it allowed us to fulfil the specific
36 requirements of interest for our research project. One of the common limitations in a
37 case study includes the fact that it is not always easy to find a unique and singular case
38 that is available for study and shows commitment to the research (Stake, 2005). In our
39 research process, we were fortunate to find such a centre, since the educational
40 community was also committed to participating in our study. Furthermore, it is
41 important to highlight that this study and its implications are contextualised in a Spanish
42 scenario, which presents characteristics that are different to those of any other territory,
43 and it is therefore important to take this aspect into account.

50 There is a large body of research on the factors that lead to the achievement of better
51 schools in challenging contexts (Chapman & Harris, 2010; Hopkins, 2001; Potter,
52 Reynolds & Chapman, 2002). Research indicates that methodological innovation and
53 inclusion (Ainscow, Booth, & Dyson, 2006) are both key in this case. We believe that
54 whilst these studies can point us in the right direction, we also argue that all of these
55 achievements are the consequence of a professional team that is committed and united
56 by the same cause, and therefore, analysing these leading professional teams and their
57 identity is of vital importance and interest to us (Day, Elliot, & Kington, 2005).

1
2
3 Further, the findings of our study demonstrate the importance of having a school
4 principal with a consolidated professional identity oriented towards horizontal values
5 and social justice, particularly when dealing with difficult contexts. In recent decades,
6 many studies have focused on the functions of school leadership (Cowie and Crawford,
7 2008, Schleicher, 2012), and to a lesser extent on the more identitarian aspect (Crow,
8 Day & Moller, 2017; Browne-Ferrigno, 2003).
9
10

11
12 Considering the voices that constitute the school context has provided us with a wealth
13 of information in this study. In future studies related to professional identity and
14 leadership, we recommend the inclusion of these perspectives and narratives, as they are
15 not only important for triangulating information from different professional agents, but
16 also complete the bi-dimensionality that is inherent to identity, based on Dubar's ideals
17 (2002).
18
19

20
21 Finally, the last purpose of this study was the establishment of comprehensive keys to
22 professional practice based on the results extracted. We consider that from the analysis
23 of this singular case, we can extract key factors that help us to guide future practices of
24 educational action. The school under study is located within the educational centres of
25 interest for the ISSPP project. Thus, analysing its professional practices can guide us
26 towards key strategies and actions that can be implemented in other contexts with
27 similar characteristics to the one studied here. Empowering students was one of the
28 successful ways that this school developed as a means of creating educational practices
29 towards a democratic school.
30
31

- 32
33
- 34 • The results revealed that in order to achieve educational success in this context,
35 it was essential to establish intra-inter school relations, involving and making
36 everyone participate in the education of future generations. In particular,
37 opening the doors of the centre to the community, spreading enthusiasm and
38 involving everyone so that everyone will be the winner of a better school. This is
39 why future educational professionals who seek to create a better and more equal
40 school could take this issue as a starting point. In line with Robinson (2007), this
41 could provide the basis for developing an inclusive and supportive environment
42 at the school.
43
 - 44 • In contexts of cultural plurality, diversity must be transformed into richness. For
45 this reason, the different needs of the student body are converted into
46 opportunities to address diverse themes in the most connected way, giving a
47 voice to the child himself (Tonucci, 2015). Listening to the child, encouraging
48 him/her to be the protagonist of his/her own learning, is a motivating element
49 that reaffirms him/her as a part of his/her school and reinforces his/her sign of
50 identity. The case analysed in this study, conceives and works from this
51 perspective to delve deeper into the educational needs of students and go into a
52 close and respectful in its most emotional and personal dimension.
53
 - 54 • For the protagonist of this study, Alberto, being a principal was a way to convey
55 the feeling of togetherness and unity in his professional team. Leading through
56 the school's organizational hierarchy was never an option. Leading *with* his
57
58
59
60

colleagues, however, was the basic premise that underpinned his professional activities. For this reason, we consider it key that in the search for educational improvement, the school's professionals should dream together. That is to say, they should create a joint vision of what they want in their school, aims that should be based on the voices and ideas of everyone. Only by doing so can they feel that they are participants in the goals to be achieved.

References

- Ainscow, M., Booth, T., & Dyson, A. (2006). *Improving schools, developing inclusion*. Routledge.
- Bolam, R., McMahon, A., Stoll, L., Thomas, S., Wallace, M., Greenwood, A., ... & Smith, M. (2005). *Creating and sustaining effective professional learning communities* (Vol. 637). Research report.
- Bolam, R., McMahon, A., Stoll, L., Thomas, S., Wallace, M., Greenwood, A., Hawkey, K., Ingram, M., Atkinson, A. & Smith, M. (2005). *Creating and sustaining effective professional learning communities. Research Report 637*. London: DfES and University of Bristol
- Bolívar, A. (2006). A Liderança Educacional e a Direcção Escolar em Espanha: Entre a Necessidade e a (Im)possibilidade. *Administração Educacional*, 6, 76-93.
- Bolívar, A., & Ritacco, M. (2016). Impacto del modelo español de dirección escolar en la identidad profesional de los líderes escolares. *Education Policy Analysis Archives/Archivos Analíticos de Políticas Educativas*, 24, 1-35.
- Bolívar, A., Fernández, M. & Molina, E. (2005). Investigar la identidad profesional del profesorado: Una triangulación secuencial. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 6(1), Art. 12.
- Bosker, R.J., Vos, H.D. & Witziers, B. (2000). *Theories and Models of Educational Effectiveness*. Twente University Press: Enschede.
- Browne-Ferrigno, T. (2003). Becoming a principal: Role conception, initial socialization, roleidentity transformation, purposeful engagement. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 39: 468-503.
- Carpenter, B., Bukoski, B., Berry, M. & Mitchell, A. M (2015). Examining the Social Justice Identity of Assistant Principals in Persistently Low- Achieving Schools. *Urban Education*, 52(3), 287–315. DOI:1177/0042085915574529
- Chapman, C. & Harris, A. (2004) Improving schools in difficult and challenging contexts: strategies for improvement. *Educational Research*, 46 (3): 219–228. DOI: 10.1080/0013188042000277296

- 1
2
3 Copland, M. A., & Boatright, E. E. (2004). Leading Small: Eight Lessons for Leaders in
4 Transforming Large Comprehensive High Schools. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 85(10),
5 762–770. doi:10.1177/003172170408501011
6
7
8 Court, M. (2005). Negotiating and reconstructing gendered leadership discourses. In J.
9 Collard y C. Reynolds. (Eds.), *Leadership, gender and culture in education:
10 Male and female perspectives* (pp. 1–21). New York: Open University Press
11
12
13 Cowie, M., & Crawford, M. (2008). " Being" a new principal in Scotland. *Journal of
14 Educational Administration*, 46(6), 676-689. Doi: 10.1108/09578230810908271
15
16
17 Creswell, J.W. & Clark, V.L. (2011). *Designing and Conducting Mixed Method
18 Research*. Los Angeles: Sage Publications.
19
20
21 Crow G Day C and Møller J. 2017. Framing research on school principals' identities.
22 *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 20 (3): 265-277. doi:
23 10.1080/13603124.2015.1123299
24
25 Cruz-González, C., Lucena, C., Domingo, J. (2020). A systematic review of principals'
26 leadership identity from 1993 to 2019. *Educational Management Administration
27 & Leadership*, 23. doi: 10.1177/1741143219896053
28
29 Cruz-González, C., Pérez, M., & Domingo, J. (2020). Marta's story: a female principal
30 leading in challenge contexts. *School Leadership & Management*, 40(5), 384-
31 405. DOI:10.1080/13632434.2020.1719401
32
33
34 Day, C. (2005). Sustaining success in challenging contexts: Leadership in English
35 schools. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 43(6), 573–583. doi: 10.1007/1-
36 4020-5516-1_4
37
38
39 Day, C. Sammons, P., Hopkins, D., Harris, A., Leithwood, K., Gu, Q. and Brown, E.
40 (2010). *10 strong claims about effective school leadership*. Nottingham:
41 National College for Leadership of Schools and Children's Services.
42
43 Day, C., Elliot, B., & Kington, A. (2005). Reform, standards and teacher identity:
44 Challenges of sustaining commitment. *Teaching and teacher Education*, 21(5),
45 563-577. doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2005.03.001
46
47
48 Day, D. V. (2000). Leadership development:: A review in context. *The leadership
49 quarterly*, 11(4), 581-613. DOI: 10.1016/S1048-9843(00)00061-8
50
51 DeRue, D. S., and Ashford, S. J. (2010). Who will lead and who will follow? A social
52 process of leadership identity construction in organizations. *Academy of
53 management review*, 35(4), 627-647. doi: 10.5465/AMR.2010.53503267
54
55 Dubar, C. (2000). *La Crise des Identités L'Interprétation d'une Mutation*. Paris: Presses
56 Universitaires de France.
57
58 Dubar, C. (2002). *La crisis de las identidades: la interpretación de una mutación*.
59 Barcelona: Bellaterra.
60

- 1
2
3 Dubar, C. (2010), *La Socialisation. Construction des Identités Sociales et*
4 *Professionnelles* (4th revised edition), Armand Colin, Paris.
5
6
7 Dubar, C.I. (2000), *La Crise des Identités L'Interprétation d'une Mutation*. Paris,
8 Presses Universitaires de France.
9
10 DuFour, R., & Eaker, R. (2009). *Professional learning communities at work tm: best*
11 *practices for enhancing students achievement*. Solution Tree Press.
12
13
14 Elmore, R. F. (2000). Building a new structure for school leadership. Albert Shanker
15 Institute.
16
17 Fielding, M. (2004). Transformative approaches to student voice: Theoretical
18 underpinnings, recalcitrant realities. *British educational research journal*, 30(2),
19 295-311. DOI: 10.1080/0141192042000195236
20
21
22 Fischer-Rosenthal, W. & Rosenthal, G. (1997). Narrationsanalyse biographischer
23 Selbstpräsentationen. In Ronald Hitzler & Anne Honer (Eds.),
24 *Sozialwissenschaftliche Hermeneutik* (pp. 133-65). Opladen: Leske und Budrich
25
26 Fullan, M. (2002). Principals as leaders in a culture of change. *Educational leadership*,
27 59(8), 16-21.
28
29
30 Furman, G. (2012). Social justice leadership as praxis: Developing capacities through
31 preparation programs. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 48(2), 191-229.
32 Doi: 10.1177/0013161X11427394
33
34
35 Glaser, R. (1991). The maturing of the relationship between the science of learning and
36 cognition and educational practice. *Learning and instruction*, 1(2), 129-144.
37
38
39 Griffith, J. (2004), "Relation of principal transformational leadership to school staff job
40 satisfaction, staff turnover, and school performance", *Journal of Educational*
41 *Administration*, 42 (3), 333-356. Doi: 10.1108/09578230410534667
42
43
44 Griffith, J. (2004). Relation of principal transformational leadership to school staff job
45 satisfaction, staff turnover, and school performance. *Journal of educational*
46 *administration*, 42(3), 333-356. DOI: 10.1108/09578230410534667
47
48
49 Gronn, P. (2009). Hybrid leadership. In Leithwood, K., Mascall, B. and Strauss, T.
50 (Eds.), *Distributed Leadership According to the Evidence*. New York:
51 Routledge.
52
53
54 Hallinger, P. (2011), "Leadership for learning: lessons from 40 years of empirical
55 research", *Journal of Educational Administration*, Vol. 49 No. 2, pp. 125-142.
56 <https://doi.org/10.1108/09578231111116699>
57
58
59 Hallinger, P., & Heck, R. H. (1998). Exploring the Principal's Contribution to School
60 Effectiveness: 1980-1995. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement: An*

- 1
2
3 *International Journal of Research, Policy and Practice*, 9, 157-
4 191. doi:10.1080/0924345980090203
5
- 6 Hallinger, P., & Heck, R. H. (2010). Leadership for learning: Does collaborative
7 leadership make a difference in school improvement?. *Educational management*
8 *administration & leadership*, 38(6), 654-678. DOI: 10.1177/1741143210379060
9
- 10 Hargreaves, A., & Fink, D. (2012). *Sustainable leadership* (Vol. 6). San Francisco: John
11 Wiley & Sons.
12
- 13 Harris, A. & Jones, M. (2019) Teacher leadership and educational change, *School*
14 *Leadership & Management*, 39:2, 123-126, doi:
15 10.1080/13632434.2019.1574964
16
- 17 Hoffman-Kipp, P., Artiles, A. J., & Lopez-Torres, L. (2003). Beyond reflection:
18 Teacher learning as praxis. *Theory into practice*, 42(3), 248-254.
19 doi:10.1207/s15430421tip4203_12
20
- 21 Hopf, C. (2004). Qualitative interviews: An overview. In Uwe Flick, Ernst von Kardorff
22 & Ines Steinke (Eds.), *A Companion to Qualitative Research* (pp. 203-208).
23 London: Sage publications.
24
- 25 Hopkins, D. (2001b) Meeting the challenge: an improvement guide for schools facing
26 challenging circumstances (London, DfES).
27
- 28 Hopkins, D., Stringfield, S., Harris, A., Stoll, L., & Mackay, T. (2014). School and
29 system improvement: A narrative state-of-the-art review. *School Effectiveness*
30 *and School Improvement*, 25(2), 257-281. doi:
31 doi.org/10.1080/09243453.2014.885452
32
- 33 Husu, J., & Tirri, K. (2007). Developing whole school pedagogical values—A case of
34 going through the ethos of “good schooling”. *Teaching and teacher*
35 *education*, 23(4), 390-401. Doi:10.1016/j.tate.2006.12.015
36
- 37 John Dewey (1934). *Art as Experience*, New York, Capricorn Books, 1939, pp. 35-
38 57.
39
- 40 Kelchtermans, G. (1993). Getting the Story, Understanding the Lives: From Career
41 Stories to Teachers’ Professional Development. *Teaching and Teacher*
42 *Education* 9, 443–456. doi:10. 1016/0742-051X(93)90029-G
43
- 44 Kelchtermans, G. (2016). The emotional dimension in teachers’ work lives: a narrative-
45 biographical perspective. In Michalinos Zembylas & Paul A. Schutz (cords.).
46 *Methodological advances in research on emotion and education* (pp. 31-42).
47 Cham: Springer International Publishing.
48
- 49 Leithwood, K., Day, C., Sammons, P., Harris, A. y Hopkins, D. (2006) Successful
50 school leadership: What is it and how it influences student learning. Research
51 Report 800. London: DfES
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

- 1
2
3 Lumby, J. (2006) Conceptualizing diversity and leadership: evidence from ten cases.
4 *Educational management and administration*, 34 (2): 151-165.
5
6
7 Marshall, C., & Oliva, M. (2010). *Leadership for social justice: Making revolutions in*
8 *education* (2nd ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
9
10 Mullen, C. A., & Patrick, R. L. (2000). The persistent dream: A principal's promising
11 reform of an at-risk elementary urban school. *Journal of education for students*
12 *placed at risk*, 5(3), 229-250.
13
14
15 Murillo Torrecilla, F. J., & Hernández-Castilla, R. (2014). Liderando escuelas justas
16 para la justicia social. *Revista Internacional de Educación para la Justicia*
17 *Social (RIEJS)*.
18
19
20 Murillo Torrecilla, F. J., & Hernández-Castilla, R. (2014). Liderando escuelas justas
21 para la justicia social. *Revista Internacional de Educación para la Justicia*
22 *Social (RIEJS)*.
23
24
25 Ninković, S., & Florić, O. K. (2016). Preduzetničke sklonosti studenata
26 društvenohumanističkih nauka. *XXII Skup TRENDOVI RAZVOJA: "Nove*
27 *tehnologije u nastavi"*, Zlatibor, 16-19.
28
29 Obiakor, F.E. (2014). Multicultural education: The mismeasured but important
30 phenomenon. In A.J. Holliman (Ed.). *The Routledge international companion to*
31 *educational psychology* (pp. 191-190). London, England: Routledge.
32
33 Official Bulletin of the Andalusian Regional Government, Number 219, 13/11/2019.
34 <https://www.juntadeandalucia.es/boja/2019/219/s2.2>
35
36
37 Portelli, J. P., & McMahon, B. J. (2004). Why critical-democratic engagement?. *Journal*
38 *of Maltese Education Research*, 2(2), 39-45.
39
40 Potter, D., Reynolds, D. & Chapman, C. (2002) School improvement for schools facing
41 challenging circumstances: a review of research and practice, *School*
42 *Leadership and Management*, 12(3).
43
44
45 Punch, S. (2012). Hidden struggles of fieldwork: Exploring the role and use of field
46 diaries. *Emotion, Space and Society*, 5(2), 86-93. doi:
47 10.1016/j.emospa.2010.09.005
48
49
50 Punch, S. (2012). *Hidden struggles of fieldwork: Exploring the role and use of field*
51 *diaries*. *Emotion, Space and Society*, 5(2), 86–
52 93. doi:10.1016/j.emospa.2010.09.005
53
54 Ricoeur, P. (1996). *Sí mismo como otro*. Siglo XXI: Madrid, España
55
56
57 Ritacco, M., and Bolívar, A. (2018), "School principals in Spain: an unstable
58 identity", *International Journal of Educational Leadership and Managment*,
59 vol. 6 No.1, pp.18-39.
60

- 1
2
3 Robertson S (2017) Transformation of professional identity in an experienced primary
4 school principal A New Zealand case study. *Educational Management*
5 *Administration and Leadership* 45 (5): 774- 789. DOI:
6 101177/1741143217707519
7
8
9
10 Robinson, V. (2007). School leadership and student outcomes: Identifying what works
11 and why. Melbourne, VIC: Australian Council for Educational Leaders
12 Monograph
13
14 Robinson, V. (2013). Three capabilities for student-centered leadership. *The Jossey-*
15 *Bass reader on educational leadership*, 297-316.
16
17
18 Rudduck J and McIntyre D (2007). Improving learning through consulting pupils.
19 London: Routledge
20
21 Rudduck, J. (2007). Student voice, student engagement, and school reform.
22 In *International handbook of student experience in elementary and secondary*
23 *school* (pp. 587-610). Springer, Dordrecht.
24
25
26 Rudduck, J., & Flutter, J. (2007). *Cómo mejorar tu centro escolar dando la voz al*
27 *alumnado*. Ediciones Morata.
28
29
30 Sammons, P., & Bakkum, L. (2011). Effective schools, equity and teacher efficacy: A
31 review of the literature. *Profesorado, revista de currículo y formación del*
32 *profesorado*, 15(3), 9-26.
33
34
35 Schleicher, A. (2012). *Preparing Teachers and Developing School Leaders for the 21st*
36 *Century: Lessons from around the World*. Paris: OECD Publishing. DOI:
37 10.1787/23127090
38
39
40 Shulman, L. S., & Shulman, J. H. (2004). *How and what teachers learn: A shifting*
41 *perspective. Journal of curriculum studies*, 36(2), 257-271. doi:
42 10.1080/0022027032000148298
43
44
45 Skaalvik, E. M., & Skaalvik, S. (2014). Teacher self-efficacy and perceived autonomy:
46 Relations with teacher engagement, job satisfaction, and emotional
47 exhaustion. *Psychological reports*, 114(1), 68-77. doi:
48 10.2466/14.02.PR0.114k14w0
49
50
51 Stake, R. E. (2005). *Investigación con estudio de casos*. Madrid, Morata.
52
53
54 Stoll, L., & Louis, K. S. (2007). Professional learning communities: Elaborating new
55 approaches. *Professional learning communities: Divergence, depth and*
56 *dilemmas*, 1-13.
57
58
59 Stoll, L., Bolam, R., McMahon, A., Thomas, S., Wallace, M., Greenwood, A. &
60 Hawkey, K. (2006). *Professional learning communities: Source materials for*

1
2
3 *school leaders and other leaders of professional learning*. London: Innovation
4 Unit, DfES, NCSL and GTC
5

6 Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1998). *Basics of qualitative research techniques*. Thousand
7 Oaks, CA: Sage publications.
8

9
10 Sugrue, C. (2005). Being principal: Leadership inside out. In: Sugrue, C. (ed.).
11 *Passionate Principals: Learning From the Life Histories of School*
12 *Leaders*. London and New York: RoutledgeFalmer, pp. 135–157.
13

14
15 Tonucci F (2015). *La ciudad de los niños* (Ed. rev.). Barcelona: Grao.
16

17 Trede, F., Macklin, R. and Bridges, D. (2012). Professional identity development: a
18 review of the Higher Education literature. *Studies in Higher Education*, 37, 365-
19 384. doi: 10.1080/03075079.2010.521237
20

21
22 Wahlstrom, K., & Louis, K.S. (2008). How teachers perceive principal leadership.
23 *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 44(4), 498-445. doi:
24 10.1177/0013161X08321502
25

26
27 Watson, I. (2014). Re-centring first nations knowledge and places in a terra nullius
28 space. *AlterNative: An international Journal of Indigenous Peoples*, 10 (5): 508-
29 520. DOI: 10.1177/2F117718011401000506
30

31
32 Wenger, E (1998). *Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning and Identity*.
33 Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
34

35 Young, I. M. (2011). *Justice and the politics of difference*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton
36 University Press
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

Interview type	Main topics of the interviews	Number of interviews	Participants
In-depth biographical	History and biography of the principal Personal characteristics, professional values, and motivation Visions and goals Leadership role Initiatives carried out in the centre for educational improvement Challenges encountered in school management since being appointed Strategies used to respond to educational challenges	8	1 Principal
Semi-structured interviews	Characteristics and identity traits that define the principal as a leader Initiatives developed by the principal and management team to achieve school improvement Leadership strategies developed in the school to respond to problem situations	2/3 to each participant	5 Family members 10 Students 10 Teachers 1 Therapeutic Pedagogy teacher (TP teacher) 1 Secretary 1 Councillor 1 Service staff 1 Councillor for Education and Culture 1 Guadalinfo* (digital literacy initiative) representative 1 Inspector

* Guadalinfo is the Andalusian public network of digital competence centres, open innovation, and Internet access, whose focus is to empower people (using ICT as a tool) to be the engine of transformation of their communities.

Table 1. Participants in our case study and type of interview developed with each one