Social leadership, the motor for management practices in education in contexts of confinement

Liderazgo social, motor de las prácticas directivas en educación en contextos de encierro

Marcela Gaete Vergara[1], Violeta Acuña Collado[2], Marisol Ramírez Muga[1]
1 Departamento Estudios Pedagógicos, Universidad de Chile, Santiago, Chile
2 Facultad de Educación, Universidad de Playa Ancha, Valparaíso, Chile
* magaete@uchile.cl

Background

Education in contexts of confinement is a topic with little study. In Chile, in particular, studies are scarce and there are no specific public policies in relation to curriculum, teacher training, evaluation, requirements for management teams, among others. Little is known about the functioning of schools and other non-formal pedagogical projects within the detention centers, being relevant to explore the way in which directive leadership develops in contexts as adverse as one of incarceration, especially because international evidence indicates that it indirectly influences and models the conditions of learning production in students.

In this regard, a series of policies have been designed in Chile, not only for the purpose of selecting management but also for determining performance standards for good school leadership and guidance, assigning attributions and incentives, guiding accountability and implementing relevant training activities. Prevailing policies both for schools in the free environment and in confinement contexts.

Objectives

The research has proposed to map formal and non-formal training projects that coexist within prisons and juvenile detention centers of the Metropolitan Region of Chile, investigating in various pedagogical dimensions, with the directive leadership being one of them.

Method & Procedure

The research is exploratory, descriptive, and qualitative. The universe corresponds to schools and non-formal projects that were developed between 2017 and 2018 in confinement contexts of Greater Santiago, Chile. Data were collected through various instruments: questionnaires, analysis of institutional documents, interviews, focus groups. The results presented in this paper are the result of the analysis of semi-structured interviews conducted with directive teams of 69 institutions and organizations out of a total of 72 identified. The analysis was carried out through the lifting of semantic categories, which allowed distinguishing nuclei of meaning, as well as triangulating the information among the participants, and also carrying out a theoretical triangulation, in order to safeguard the criteria of rigorous research.

Results & Discussion

The educational establishments inside the prisons are subject to a vision of education as a benefit, the preposition of the paradigm of security over the educational, the purpose of education oriented towards rehabilitation, reintegration or diminish criminal offence recidivism. In this context, the Framework for Good Management and School Leadership (MBDLE), as a guiding instrument of the directive practices of educational establishments in Chile, presents a low relevance due to the characteristic problems of managing an institution (the school) within another institution (the prison) and because prisons are outside traditional social rules. Hence, the school effectiveness and management style of leadership, in which the MBDLE is sustained, are not only almost impossible to carry out, but they seem not to make much sense.

For their part, in prisons, formal and non-formal education coexist, which, beyond the differences between their objectives, ideological, political, structure or other commitments, present common characteristics in the way they manage and lead their projects. All, to a greater or lesser extent, move away from the managerial perspective of leadership, expressing awareness of the political dimension of their actions and an intense social commitment that is embodied in the struggle for education as a right and the possibility of exercising a pedagogy sustained in hope and human dignity. A pedagogy that is not played in the application of performance standards, but is understood as praxis,

subject to uncertainty, to the immanence of time, to change, to the unpredictability of relationships, to precariousness as a permanent condition, in that even rules must be broken to reach a certain relevance, and where the social leadership, carried out by driving people is what allows educational establishments and non-formal projects to remain in time.

Conclusion

In prison, the effectiveness of schools cannot be measured by enrollment, performance, promotion, results in national standardized assessments or by entering higher education, hence the devices created for accountability and promotion, definitely, cannot operate because they do not provide guidelines that can be implemented in these contexts. Liberated education from these devices, a leadership emerges and manifests itself as a practice of freedom, because the subjects who decide for such space embrace ethical and political positions towards social justice, fight for common dreams in relation to education as an inalienable right. Formal and non-formal education are characterized by social and non-managerial leadership, carried out by driving forces, aware that they live in a social environment crossed by power relations that must be disputed. A specific public policy is necessary for education in prisons, since instruments designed for the free environment contribute to a certain vision of society and education that is completely impertinent in these contexts.

Keywords: directive characteristics, leadership, prison education, right to education

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