

Distributed leadership practices in vocational education and training: New ways of learning, teaching and working

Prácticas de liderazgo distribuido en formación técnico profesional: Nuevas formas de aprender, enseñar y trabajar

Luis Ahumada Figueroa* 

Escuela de Psicología, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso, Valparaíso, Chile (luis.ahumada@pucv.cl)

Soledad Castro Castro 

Fundación Mujeres por la Educación, Chile (castrosoledad77@gmail.com)

Oscar Maureira Cabrera 

Escuela de Ciencias y Tecnología Educativa, Facultad de Educación, Universidad Católica Silva Henríquez, Santiago, Chile (omaureir@ucsh.cl)

Mauricio Pino-Yancovic 

Instituto de Estudios Avanzados en Educación y CIAE, Universidad de Chile, Santiago, Chile

(mauricio.pino@ciae.uchile.cl)

*Corresponding author.

Received: April 04, 2023

Accepted: October 31, 2023

Published: November 15, 2023

Recommended citation: Ahumada Figueroa, L., Castro Castro, S., Maureira Cabrera, O., & Pino-Yancovic, M. (2023). Prácticas de liderazgo distribuido en formación técnico profesional: Nuevas formas de aprender, enseñar y trabajar. *Psicoperspectivas*, 22(3). <https://dx.doi.org/10.5027/psicoperspectivas-vol22-issue3-fulltext-2949>

Background

Professional technical training has been highlighted for its importance in the economic and social development of countries, as well as for promoting greater equity, social mobility, and employment opportunities for its students. However, it has been scarcely studied in Chile and worldwide. In Chile, technical vocational training is an initial preparation area and comprehensive training for adult life, combining both theoretical and practical learning in a given occupational field. One central aspect of this educational modality is its link with the productive sector, and it must develop organizational structures and curricular programs to respond to the evolving characteristics of the environment, especially challenging the work of educational leaders. In the field of leadership practices, distributed leadership, emerged from the relationships and interactions in daily practices within an educational community, has been particularly emphasized.

Aims

The objective of this study was to identify and characterize distributed leadership practices in secondary professional technical education centers with a sustained track record of improvement.

Method & procedures

To identify and characterize distributed leadership practices, a multiple case study method was employed, which was exploratory and instrumental. In other words, the aim was to investigate a common phenomenon that should be present in different cases using a paradigmatic case approach. A paradigmatic case possesses specific characteristics that can be compared to others precisely due to its specificity and can shed light on other similar cases. The paradigmatic nature of the cases chosen in this study is related to their sustained track record of school improvement.

Results & discussion

A primary finding is the identification of two types of distributed leadership practices: a) those focused on improving teaching and learning methodologies and b) those aimed at creating structural conditions that strengthen distributed leadership and a culture of collaboration. Project-Based Learning (PBL) is a distributed leadership practice that

appears in three of the investigated cases. The support of the sponsor or governing body in establishing new work methodologies and shared leadership also facilitates the implementation of distributed leadership practices. Particularly relevant for professional development is the use of the PBL methodology. However, only three cases have fully implemented it, all privately subsidized institutions. This raises critical questions about how teacher professional development in the public education sector is being strengthened and the support provided by the sponsor in this regard. Regarding the obstacles to implementing distributed leadership practices, pedagogical management dimension appears to have the highest number of hindrances. This reinforces the idea that distributed leadership not only requires the school leadership to create conditions for changes in organizational structure but also demands that teachers make profound changes in teaching and learning processes with a pedagogical focus and student-centered approach. In technical and professional education, however, this focus becomes even more critical due to the characteristics of this type of training, which requires constant interaction between productive and educational sectors.

Conclusion

The distributed leadership practices identified in this study are related to changes in teaching and learning processes, in organizational structures, or in relationships, within and outside the educational institution. Many of the investigated cases have adopted active learning methodologies, such as PBL or the dual model that combines education in schools with training in companies and organizations. In Chile, this type of learning is encouraged by educational policy for technical and professional education. However, its effective management with social articulation and impact remains a significant challenge. The results of this research contribute to these capabilities by adding the ability to design projects with a strategic vision, connect with the social needs of students, and actively engage with the community. Particularly in technical and professional education, this methodology increases student motivation and collaborative work, through the implementation of research projects. The implications of the findings of this study point to the need to delve deeper into the cultural, social, and economic context in which distributed leadership practices are deployed. Furthermore, efforts should be made to address aspects related to education policy specifically geared towards technical and professional education, which could either facilitate or hinder the implementation of the practices identified in this study.

Keywords: case study, distributed leadership, leadership, school improvement, vocational education and training

References

- Bravo-Rojas, M., Rojas-Jara, A., & Mondaca-Rojas, C. (2021). Liderazgo distribuido y sistémico con pertinencia cultural en la educación media técnico profesional chilena: Desafíos y propuestas de política educativas. *Interciencia*, 46(12), 462-470.
- Domingo, V. (2021). La Formación Profesional Dual en Aragón: Visión empresarial del sector de atención a la dependencia. *Revista Electrónica de Investigación Educativa*, 23(e25), 1-12.
<https://doi.org/10.24320/redie.2021.23.e25.3551>
- Flyvbjerg, B. (2006). Five misunderstandings about case-study research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 12(2), 219-245.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800405284363>
- Irit, S., Grinshtain, Y., Ayali, T., & Yehuda, I. (2022). Leading the school change: the relationships between distributed leadership, resistance to change, and pedagogical practices. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 1-19. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603124.2022.2068187>
- Ministerio de Educación [de Chile]. (MINEDUC, 2021). Estándares Indicativos de Desempeño para los establecimientos que imparten Educación Media Técnico-Profesional y sus sostenedores.
https://bibliotecadigital.mineduc.cl/bitstream/handle/20.500.12365/17527/EID_TP_estandar.pdf?sequence=4&isAllowed=y

Financial support: Project FONDECYT 12100249 and ANID/PIA/Fondos Basales para Centros de Excelencia FB0003.

Conflict of interests: The authors declare to have no conflict of interests.

CrediT: Conceptualization: LA, SC, OM, MP; Methodology: LA, OM, MP; Validation: LA, SC, OM, MP; Data curation: LA, SC, OM, MP; Writing (original draft): LA, SC, OM; Writing (revisión and editing): MP; Funding acquisition: LA, OM, MP; Project administration: LA.



Published under [Creative Commons Attribution International 4.0 License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)