



School effectiveness in marginalized urban settings. Case of a primary school in Monterrey, Mexico

Eficacia escolar en entornos urbano-marginados. Caso de una escuela primaria en Monterrey, México

Eficácia da escola em ambientes urbanos marginalizados. Caso de uma escola primária em Monterrey, México

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ABSTRACT. This article investigates how institutional management, teacher and family involvement are amalgamated for sustained school achievement. The research took place in a public school in northern Mexico. The students of this institution, -located in a marginalized and violent community, obtained for three years, scores higher than the national average in tests that measure knowledge in Spanish, mathematics, and science. Through a qualitative case study that used organizational micro sociology and symbolic interactionism, we found that institutional management is based on organizational systems, leadership is shared and based on trust; the teachers have high academic and pedagogical competencies, use innovative playful strategies, maintain the concern to maintain high academic standards; interpersonal relationships are close; families support and participate in the school consistently. It is concluded that it is possible to achieve educational effectiveness when the context is not seen as limiting, but as an enhancer of learning, when there is organization,

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integration, commitment, roots, and when the educational community considers that education has the potential for transformation social.

PALABRAS CLAVE

Eficacia escolar, sistemas organizacionales, liderazgo, marginación.

RESUMEN. Este artículo indaga cómo la gestión institucional, el involucramiento docente y familiar se amalgaman para el logro escolar sostenido. La investigación se desarrolló en una escuela pública en el norte de México. Los estudiantes de esta institución, -localizada en una comunidad marginada y violenta-, obtuvieron durante tres años, puntajes superiores a la media nacional en pruebas que miden conocimientos en español, matemáticas y ciencias. Mediante un estudio de caso cualitativo que empleó la microsociología organizacional y el interaccionismo simbólico, encontramos que la gestión institucional está basada en sistemas organizacionales, el liderazgo es compartido y basado en la confianza; los docentes cuentan con altas competencias académicas y pedagógicas, utilizan estrategias innovadoras lúdicas, mantienen preocupación por mantener altos estándares académicos; las relaciones interpersonales son cercanas; las familias apoyan y participan en la escuela de forma consistente. Se concluye que es posible lograr la eficacia educativa cuando el contexto no es visto como limitante, sino como potenciador de aprendizajes, cuando hay organización, integración, compromiso, arraigo y cuando la comunidad educativa en su conjunto considera que la educación tiene potencial para la transformación social.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

eficácia escolar, sistemas organizacionais, liderança, marginalização.

RESUMO. Este artigo investiga como a gestão institucional, o envolvimento do professor e da família se fundem para um desempenho escolar sustentado. A pesquisa foi realizada em uma escola pública no norte do México. Os alunos desta instituição, localizada em uma comunidade marginalizada e violenta, obtiveram, por três anos, notas acima da média nacional em provas que medem conhecimentos em espanhol, matemática e ciências. Por meio de um estudo de caso qualitativo que utilizou a microsociologia organizacional e o interaccionismo simbólico, constatamos que a gestão institucional é baseada em sistemas organizacionais, a liderança é compartilhada e baseada na confiança; os professores possuem elevadas competências acadêmicas e pedagógicas, utilizam estratégias lúdicas inovadoras, mantêm a preocupação em manter elevados padrões acadêmicos; as relações interpessoais são próximas; as famílias apóiam e participam da escola de maneira consistente. Conclui-se que é possível alcançar eficácia educacional quando o contexto não é visto como limitador, mas como potencializador da aprendizagem, quando há organização, integração, compromisso, raízes e quando a comunidade educacional como um todo considera que a educação tem o potencial de transformação social.

1. INTRODUCTION

Studies on effective schools were born in the 1970s, mainly in the Anglo-Saxon context. In the eighties and nineties, the movement gained relevance in Latin America, when investigations were carried out that identified the characteristics of schools where their students obtained outstanding academic results (Murillo, 2008; Murillo & Krichesky, 2015).

Educational effectiveness is defined as “one that promotes in a lasting way the integral development of each and every one of the students, beyond what would be foreseeable taking into account their previous performance and the socioeconomic and cultural situation of their families” (Murillo, 2005, in Hernandez et al., 2014:104).

More recent theoretical approaches offer explanations about school effectiveness based on two models: one global empirical and the other analytical, the first noting that there are effectiveness factors of context, input, process, and product. Identify contextual factors and characteristics of the school related to student achievement; also, the input factors, such as the particularities of the classroom, teachers, and students. It focuses especially on process factors, identified as a sense of community, leadership, school climate, monitoring and evaluation, teacher professional development, family involvement, resources, materials, and the quality of the curriculum. Product factors such as gender, family socioeconomic status, and academic achievement provide little



information on the relationships between the different factors. The second model is analytical, it looks inside schools, in the relationships established inside and outside the classroom to describe how they are generated and what factors affect the optimal use of students (Murillo, 2008). Both approaches reconfigure a comprehensive and holistic understanding of school effectiveness.

A common criterion for the analysis of educational effectiveness is to study reality; for Bellei et al. (2004) good teaching is contextual, there is not one or more universally effective practices, but rather the scope of the effectiveness of the practices –management, teaching or coexistence– results in their adequacy. Studying school effectiveness then requires focusing on schools and their actors as main agents, capable of transcending the structural conditioning and socioeconomic determinants that would limit academic achievement and social, economic, and cultural performance (Bellei et al., 2014). This translates not only into student academic performance, which can be identified through measurement models and / or standardized tests, but also into the formation of citizenship, social and human capital within schools, in the climate of coexistence, as well as in interpersonal relationships, even when they face multiple disadvantages and shortcomings.

In Mexico, evaluations that estimate academic performance confirm the results of international tests and research; the less favored sectors of the population are those that present the lowest results, both in national and international examinations (INEE², 2014). Therefore, the need to identify keys and learnings that contribute to the understanding of the school as a complex and multidimensional unit of analysis persists, as well as to contribute with evidence for better decision-making in educational matters.

2. METHOD

The objective of the research³ was to reveal how institutional management and leadership, teacher, and family involvement in public primary schools, directly and indirectly affect school effectiveness positively. It was developed through a mixed sequential QUAN-QUAL design (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2011). The first stage was quantitative and was carried out through a longitudinal analysis of the databases of the ENLACE 2012 tests: PLANEA 2015 and 2016⁴. Statistical procedures were carried out that accounted for nine primary schools that reflected high rates of educational effectiveness; similarly, another five were identified that would serve as control schools, since they presented low rates of school effectiveness⁵. The fourteen public schools selected were in areas of high social marginalization in eight states of the republic distributed in the north, center and southeast of the country.

The second phase of the study was qualitative, it was developed through case studies⁶, in which information was collected through semi-structured interviews with teachers, managers, supervisors, technical-pedagogical

² National Institute for the Evaluation of Education was a body created in 2002 to evaluate the quality, performance, and results of the National Educational System in basic and upper secondary education in Mexico.

³ The research is entitled “Analysis of school management alternatives to overcome the effects of social inequality in educational achievement”, funded by the Basic Research Fund SEP-CONACyT.

⁴ These tests seek to know the quality and degree to which Mexican students master essential learning at different moments of education. They have been applied by the Ministry of Public Education (SEP) and by the National Institute of Educational Evaluation (INEE) in all elementary schools in the country and evaluate knowledge and skills in language and communication and mathematics subjects.

⁵ For the selection of schools, general criteria were established such as considering the results equivalent to the national average plus a standard deviation in a sustained manner in the three applications and choosing schools that were above the national average in the same three years.

⁶ At the beginning of this stage, a pilot test was carried out in two public primary schools located in the capital of the country. Here the qualitative instruments, the methodology for the collection of information and the way in which the subsequent analysis would be carried out were validated.

advisers and heads of the educational sector; focus groups were held with parents, as well as informal conversations and narratives from field journals because of participatory observations in each school.

This article presents the findings obtained in one of the educational centers participating in the research, the El Mirador elementary school⁷. In this case study we were interested in investigating: 1) the daily relationships or interactions that occur in the school and classroom environment, -which are developed in a particular socioeconomic context characterized as unfavorable-, 2) the values, attitudes, expectations, motivations, as well as the common objectives that are present in said interactions between school agents and on which agreements, negotiations and the mediation / resolution of conflicts are built.

In the research we return to the findings of Acevedo et al. (2017), who emphasize the importance of qualitatively approaching effective schools and those that are not and investigating the elements and dynamics that make it possible to obtain good results despite facing adverse situations.

2.1. Analytical framework for the qualitative study of school effectiveness factors

Discursive analysis was carried out through the design of hermeneutical units using the Atlas-ti software. The interviews were systematically categorized and coded⁸, maps were drawn from *a priori* categories associated with the three factors that support the research questions (institutional management and leadership, teaching involvement and family involvement), and from which in turn they emerge emerging subcategories.

To explore these three factors from a qualitative approach, we resort to the analytical framework of Blanco (2009), who addresses school organization at at least three levels: 1) external or macro level: community, environment, policies, and programs; 2) meso level: agreements and negotiations at the school and classroom level; 3) micro level: objectives, values, motivations, expectations that are given through face-to-face exchanges of school agents.

The research focused its analysis on the meso and micro levels, we used the macro level as the context in which the other levels are located and to which we will refer when it provides relevant information for its understanding. At the meso level, the practices related to agreements, negotiations and conflicts that take place in the school space and specifically referred to the managerial, teaching and parenting roles were identified.

Regarding the micro level, we start from the concept of interaction rituals developed by Collins, (2009: 64), who calls them “repetitive behavior patterns that constrain the individual, generating in him an emotional commitment to the symbols they imply”. As an analytical tool, this concept allowed us to explore how common attitudes, values and objectives were built, as well as the generation of feelings of identification, membership, and commitment with the group or with the elements that compose it.

From this position, the values, attitudes, expectations, and motivations, as well as the common objectives that are present in the interactions of school agents are the inputs on which successful school practices are configured; the basis for building agreements, negotiations and conflicts that are expressed in identifiable practices at the meso level. The qualitative, microsociological and interactional emphasis proposed contains great potential for the unveiling of elements that possibly converge in the effectiveness of this school.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

⁷ The name of the school was changed to respect confidentiality and anonymity.

⁸ In this school we collected 6 interviews with teaching staff, principal, supervisor, and a focus group with parents.



El Mirador Elementary School Case Study: A Public School in the “Favelas” of Monterrey⁹

The El Mirador educational center is a public elementary school, located in Colonia Valle del Mirador in the southern part of the municipality of Monterrey, Nuevo Leon state. It has an enrollment of three hundred and fifty-eight students¹⁰, distributed in twelve groups and attended by twenty-one teachers and administrators in the morning shift. It belongs to the school zone N 17 and shares facilities with another elementary school in the afternoon shift.

The school's student population comes from neighborhoods located on Cerro de la Campana and Cerro Altamira. The settlements in this area are around sixty years old and were initially populated by peasants from San Luis Potosi, Hidalgo, Zacatecas, and Oaxaca, who arrived in Monterrey attracted by the jobs offered by the city's industries. These colonies are part of one of the most populated popular areas of the metropolitan area, in which there are problems of insecurity (Cerde et al., 2008), and in which the presence of groups known as gangs has been documented (Cedillo, 2018; Cerda, 2010).

The different actors interviewed for this case study recognized that the school is in a precarious and violent area, that students and teachers are exposed to situations of physical vulnerability.

It has a great impact on the community [the insecurity], given that some students, especially when older, begin to bring objects that they should not; Last year we had a gun and we also had marijuana, we had knives, which are brought from the houses to school; That already puts us in a very vulnerable situation (School Director).

The southern area of Monterrey is identified as one of the places with the greatest inequality in the Monterrey city (Cerde, 2010; Sandoval, 2008; Torres, 2019). Colonies like Valle del Mirador adjoin it¹¹, where the school studied in this case is located, and San Pedro Garza Garcia, a municipality with a high level of social and economic well-being, which ranks third at the national level in the Municipal Human Development Index (Bustos, 2019; Fitch Ratings, 2020; ICP, 2018).

This contrast has motivated this area to be a focus of attention and the object of various social interventions in order to transform the environment and promote positive changes (Rodriguez, 2016). Since 2015, various civil associations, in conjunction with government authorities, higher education institutions and private companies have implemented actions to reduce the social problems it presents. To these interventions and positive actions is added the work carried out at the El Mirador school, whose commitment to educational quality is a way of dealing with social and economic inequality, and its repercussions such as insecurity and violence.

3.1. *I do not consider her my superior; she is one of my colleagues:* Institutional management at school

⁹ In Brazil, favelas are irregular settlements recognized for being rough neighborhoods, where crime regularly reigns. In Monterrey and the Metropolitan Area there are also these types of establishments, where people fight..., but to survive. They are humble neighborhoods, but difficult, where not everyone dares to walk through its alleys; They are popular neighborhoods that are home to hundreds of houses, which, over the years and the efforts of its inhabitants, took shape in the middle of canyons and rocky terrain. Being an irregular neighborhood with difficult access, the authorities kept it in total oblivion for many years. Even at present, in the highest part of the Campana, the police do not enter (Ortiz, 2018).

¹⁰ The school had this enrollment at the time of the research (2018-2019 school year).

¹¹ The calculations based on the statistical model of the measurement of poverty at the municipal level 2015 (CONEVAL) and on the results on the characteristics of the localities and the urban environment 2014 (INEGI), indicate that this neighborhood is located in a Geostatistical Area Basic (AGEB) that maintains a range of [50.70] percentage of the population living in poverty.

For Elmore (2010), institutional management is based on the construction of collective consensus, on the design and execution of shared educational projects, as well as on the legitimization of systematic pedagogical monitoring and feedback processes, aimed at academic improvement and the creation of organizational systems. To be considered effective, following this author, institutional management must impact what happens inside school classrooms.

Acevedo et al., (2017) identified some elements that make institutional management a relevant component that has a positive effect on increasing teacher involvement and student achievement. Among them are a) the good administrative organization of the center; b) the promotion of collegiate work, c) shared visions of the teaching-learning process; d) the development of frequent meeting spaces; e) close contact with educational supervision; f) recognition of the good performance of its teachers and collaborators; g) sharing, consensus and assertive communication, among others.

In the specific case of the El Mirador school, there are two factors identified in the literature that characterize effective institutional management, these are: a) systems-based management and b) the type of leadership practiced by the directive staff that generates trust and commitment for the improvement of the school. The same ones that are discussed below.

a) Systems-based institutional management

The school is shining by itself because of what is happening here, to this day I think that we stand out in our monitoring and quality systems, when one systematizes everything, it has positive results, so that right now is one of our strengths (Director of the school).

The director of the El Mirador school has overseen this educational institution for two years. This is her first challenge as a director, and she took it up after a postgraduate training course in which she specialized in school administration and management. Upon arrival at school, he proposed to implement the knowledge acquired in said training, so it was a personal initiative to propose changes, implementing systems-based management¹², to improve the effectiveness of the school organization. His focus was, initially, on administrative processes within the school. Systems-based management supports the principal, makes the fulfillment of shared tasks in a school administration efficient and improves educational achievement:

I like systems, I love systems, that works very well in any school, that is, that the teacher knows where to be, when to deliver, what to do, what is his responsibility, to be in writing and promptly, and the more time they have to know that, the better, and if they planned it better, and that was planned from the initial phase, then when there is good roots, everything else has to flow (School Director).

Management based on educational systems considers the school as the space in which consensual, planned, and achievable objectives are proposed; and people as the most important element, capable of developing teaching-learning processes (Ezpeleta, 1992). According to Hoy and Miskel (2012), educational institutions that apply systems-based management tend to be flexible schools, they adapt to changes in the environment, since they direct their efforts to the implementation of procedures and techniques with the objective of improve communication between groups and evaluate processes and progress continuously.

¹² For Hoy and Miskel (2012), organizational theory, on which systems-based management is based, is a set of interrelated concepts, definitions and generalizations that systematically describe and explain patterns of regularities in organizational life. These procedures help in decision-making and promote the effectiveness of practices, in this case, in educational management.



These characteristics are revealed in the El Mirador elementary school. It is notable that there is a consensus in the form of organization and operation of the school, for example: a) the talents in the teaching community are identified from the management, this for the distribution of activities, commissions, programs, projects (although they work together, there is a person or groups of people who lead these actions); b) there are established agreements based on staff motivation for the effective development of pedagogical work; c) there is a collective concern of the school actors to offer a quality education, always generating well-being in the teachers themselves, in the students and their families, as stated by the school director: "yes, we want to improve the quality of the kids".

In summary, by conceiving the school as an organizational system, the director considers that it promotes the productivity of teachers, the achievement and motivation of students, as well as the participation and commitment of families.

b) Leadership, trust and commitment, keys to effective educational management

Assertive communication is a characteristic of a good leader; this is a trait that, according to the teaching staff and the supervisor interviewed, the principal of El Mirador Elementary has, who describe her as a leader who knows how to organize and form teams. In addition, they maintain, he is an orderly, direct person, who sets rules and maintains good communication, maintaining closeness with everyone. Likewise, it offers feedback to teachers, promotes trust in the group, pointing out the strengths of each one and areas of opportunity, that is, it offers precise instructions when something is not working, but also recognizes when things are done Well, in a few words, she is one more colleague, said one of the interviewees:

I do not consider her my superior [the director], I consider her one more colleague with whom I can go, she gives me the confidence to go and talk to her about my concerns; because I will tell it, that is, if the truth is that obviously he sets us our rules or tells us things clearly and directly, whether it is an area of opportunity that we have or also our strengths, he also recognizes them, then, that makes, Well, that there is a good relationship (Third grade teacher).

As part of the follow-up actions and pedagogical strengthening, the director regularly goes to the classrooms to observe the teaching practices and focuses on supporting the pedagogical process so that the boys and girls acquire learning; participates in classes, guides them (teachers and students), when he considers that the contents can be developed in a better way.

I am prepared to make different types of observations according to the manual, whether of coexistence, depending on which group, but yes, almost always to go deeper into the learning depending on the goals that are going to be deepened, so I am very focused on how The teacher, rather he facilitates, because what build them are the children, not the teacher ..., I discovered that classroom visits work for me, because there I get a lot of information and I can support the teachers in that process of improving learning (Director from school).

She gives an important weight to professional updating; she attends courses herself and encourages the school staff to do so as well. He is a person who investigates new strategies and methodologies that he shares with the teaching team, an example that emerged in the interviews was when the director shared with them during several training sessions how to measure learning processes with the intention of improving the quality of teaching and learning. student achievement.

If they make us visit classrooms I will tell it, because the truth is that I will tell it, it comes very often to the classrooms to tell us things, then she herself tells us in the meetings: "I have observed that they are

working with this, that I see them very well”, So he does come to our classroom very often. We always try to catch it, to take it or at least I take it in a good way, in this it is good, here they give us suggestions to improve, and I have followed them, and they have worked for me. If [the principal] recognizes it, and she does it well, when she recognizes something, she tells us at the council meeting, when they notice our strengths, they tell us, and I think it is a way of recognizing it (Third grade teacher).

A particular interest of the director of this school is the daily observation of the relationships of boys and girls with their families, she is interested in the academic support that they can offer, but also the human, that is, the personal and family well-being of the school community. He talks with mothers and fathers about various alternatives to resolve conflicts, questions them, but also guides and motivates them, by generating high expectations from students, that is, he always tells them about the qualities and abilities they have and how they can develop them at home.

I like to stand guard at the entrance, greet the children at the entrance and there I also see, I see when I walk in the street and I have to go buy something and I see, I like to observe and I see how they talk to them, yes, I see this situation of neglect and I ask one of the students: why were you late? I fell asleep, did your mother fall asleep? (Director of the school).

A feature that the school supervisor also highlights is that she is an institutional director, that is, she takes the path of improvement as best as possible, for this she uses systems based on agreements, guidelines, and regulations. Seeks, whenever possible, spaces for meetings, respects the ideas proposed by teachers, so the work environment was described as positive, close, trustworthy, and highly respectful.

Teacher G. is very institutional, very respectful of all the rules, so yes, right, but it continues to be a good work environment and I get along super well with her, because she does her job well, that is, I do like it That she is very respectful of the guidelines, of the laws, of the norms, because I do like that things are like that and I also see harmony (School Supervisor).

We consider that the emotional and attitudinal commitment of the principal, teachers, and families, has cemented a set of values such as respect, responsibility, empathy and cohesion. Additionally, the teachers point out that the principal recognizes their work, which is gratifying for them and motivates them to continue participating actively in the activities and projects implemented. As one of the teachers shared:

The director surprises me, because the truth is a prepared person, she is a person who has the shirt on well, I know because the work she is doing, what has been done that the court that, if I come on Saturdays, I am Here and there are times we help each other and she has had that trust and that approach, we have a good, stable relationship, to deal with issues that interest us so much because we are in a group and she because we are in direction. The principal is a new teacher, I feel that she is quite responsible, there has been good chemistry, she is a very young person, very dynamic, very active, that is, she always tries to work as a team and I really respect her, because we do I think that a good dumbbell ..., and she respects one's ideas, what we want to do, she supports us and the truth is I am with her quite well (second grade teacher).

Relationships, as described in the interviews carried out, are characterized by daily practices such as the punctual fulfillment of the provisions and agreements, collaborative work, support among colleagues and trust, which promotes the achievement of the proposed objectives. The effective development of the improvement path is a result of how this educational center works, that is, an effective institutional management, which is based on the foundations of organizational theory (specifically on systems-based management), and on leadership with values. shared as respect, listening, empathy and responsibility.

In summary, the teachers, supervisor, fathers, and mothers pointed out that the principal does her job well and is committed to the school, attends weekends when necessary to carry out projects, offers refresher courses to teachers against shift in order not to lose school time, it seeks support from other institutions and organizations with the intention of benefiting the school and the families of the community. The recognition of the importance and the effect that the school organization has on educational achievement and school functioning that, from educational supervision, the direction itself, the teachers, and families of this school offer, is a characteristic of effective schools (Bolívar, 2009; Gutiérrez et al., 2017; Loera & Hernández, R. García, 2005; Murillo et al., 2011).

3.2. Teacher involvement at El Mirador elementary school

Teacher involvement is one of the factors that directly affect educational effectiveness (Acevedo et al., 2017). In this qualitative exploration of the practices and interactions carried out by the teaching and management team that works at El Mirador Elementary School, we are guided by the following questions: what are their common objectives? How are negotiations and agreements established? How do you collaborate within the school? It also explores what perceptions do they share about their belonging, roots, and commitment in the school? How are the values, motivations, expectations manifested? And at the end some examples of how these aspects are amalgamated so that educational processes work effectively and are maintained over time are described.

The teaching team that works in this school presents two distinctive characteristics of educational effectiveness: a) they are competent and pedagogically well-prepared teachers, b) it is observed that they have a sense of belonging and rootedness in the community in which they work.

a) Teachers prepared and concerned about the pedagogical

We are always looking for the way to improve and increase our academic level, I tell you we always see the way; we are not losing the time or doing nothing. (Third grade teacher).

Penalva et al. (2013) established some common characteristics that distinguish effective teachers, in their own words they are professionals who “have specialized knowledge and varied resources, which serve to manage complex situations, committed to the task, controlling practice with professional autonomy, capable of transferring and learning to learn”. According to Murillo (2007) and Murillo et al. (2011), an effective teacher is committed to innovation, seeks permanent training, the integration of creative methodologies and situated in the context, uses a positive language, generating school climates of trust, which directly influences the success of students.

For the teachers and administrators of El Mirador Elementary School, academic preparation is essential to promote educational achievement. In the interviews carried out, it was pointed out that most of the teachers who work in the school have postgraduate studies and actively participate in various professional updating programs offered by the SEP, the teachers' union, some public and private universities, associations civil, as well as other non-official courses.

In this institution everyone is prepared, there are teachers studying the master's degree, we have teachers with many years of experience, medium experience, and the new ones, this one, the new ones are entering through the Professional Teaching Service by examination (Director of the school).

One of the common objectives shared by the teachers, administrators, families and school supervision is that they promote high academic expectations of students, this materializes when they constantly motivate them to improve themselves, support them and establish opportunities for students to develop everything their potential, since they consider that they have many capacities to learn, and that – regardless of the adverse situations they

experience in the neighborhoods in which they reside - boys and girls can reach higher academic levels in the future:

This school could have a good future for the children because they deserve to be guided, because their environment where they live is sometimes very adverse (School Supervisor).

I chose the career because I like working with children, I like teaching them, let them learn... , teachers, we must commit ourselves to, regardless of the context, to move forward; because finally that is why we chose the profession. I hope, well from what I have seen, I from previous students who have finished high school and come to visit me, because I hope they are in high school and college, or it is what I most desire and I hope they do (Third grade teacher).

The stories collected in the field work in this school reveal the important role that the academic expectations of the students have this despite the challenges presented by the social context where the school is inserted. A recurring phrase in the discourse of the teachers, the director, supervisor, mothers, and fathers of families interviewed is that “students will go far”, in addition, they have seen “people from here prepare and be men and women of benefit”, which that gives them a lot of satisfaction.

According to (Murillo, 2004, 2006, 2007), the maintenance of high academic expectations towards students by teachers and families is also a characteristic element of effective schools. According to Bellei et al. (2004), the agreement and harmony that teachers and families have regarding the maintenance and promotion of academic expectations of boys and girls strengthens joint work and reinforces bonds of trust.

Another aspect that could be observed in this educational center is that teachers design and use playful and practical didactic materials; They promote the construction of learning through methodologies that prioritize the understanding and application of content, which makes students motivated, actively participate and address differences in learning styles. In their own words, they want learning to be situated or attached to the context of the students. According to Perez (2017), the contextual pedagogical approach or situated learning is a formative strategy that unites education with reality. For Hernandez & Diaz, 2015) “it is a cognitive and behavioral process that allows a subject to apprehend the reality of their environment to attend to it epistemologically and affirm again in the reality of applied knowledge” (69).

For the teaching community of this school, planning is a central element, they mentioned that in its structure it is important that they not only have the required technical and pedagogical quality, but that when implementing them in the classrooms, harmonious spaces are fostered where good relationships are established. Interpersonal, affectionate and friendly treatment:

The performance of a teacher first lies in how much he knows about the subject, if he is an expert on the subject, if he knows the purpose, the elaboration of texts, eh the process of teaching science, if he knows the cause and consequence of history; So if he has that puff focus, that is, the deeper what he knows, the better his classes are going to do; It is very important that he knows that the construction of learning comes from the inside out, not from him for the child, it is also that he knows that if he is not in a harmonious situation with the student, if they do not get along, if there is no affection , love, that you know that the relationship between the two affects a lot (Director of the school).

In this sense, we can say that one of the pillars of the educational effectiveness of this school is that its teachers are committed to the achievement of learning through the quality and specialization of their pedagogical techniques, but also to implement socio-affective resources at the same time and with the same level of relevance as the first.



In summary, the attitudes towards permanent training, the integration of creative methodologies situated in the context, as well as academic, methodological, and didactic knowledge, the use of positive language, coupled with the maintenance of an adequate school climate, generating confidence, they are elements that directly influence the success of the students at this school. By expressing their taste for teaching and pedagogical work, the teachers interviewed show how important their profession is for them, their commitment is evidenced when, regardless of the adversities and difficult situations that they identify in their students, they are driven to move on, to prepare academically and professionally, to set future goals and plans, not only because it is their job to do so, but because they trust in their abilities, so they work to develop them.

b) Roots, belongings, and the Teacher's relationships.

If someone comes and asks me: hey here is material, here is it, we share, I know people who have passed, many colleagues here even have a good friendship, there is that affection, we are happy to exchange, because we do and that is true (second grade teacher).

In this school, educational actors establish face-to-face meetings daily in a formal and informal way, for this they use various spaces such as corridors, halls, meetings, the management, and technical council meetings, they are times and places that they constantly use to communicate. In them agreements are made, negotiations are established, conflicts are resolved, seeking the well-being and participation of all.

An outstanding aspect in the teaching community is mutual support, they share resources, seek help with other colleagues for the realization of didactic materials, the application of innovative techniques or methodologies; In carrying out joint projects, there is a genuine interest in collaborating with colleagues. It was also mentioned that they have had the opportunity to receive training programs and professional updating as a group, and this has caused what they have learned to be put into practice in a better way, since they are more synchronized, always looking for spaces for exchange, collaboration and for reflection on action; distinctive characteristics that Vaillant (2016) identifies as necessary for the production of social-educational interactions that have an implication in the identity of teachers. In his words, he points out that "teaching is a collective work and collaboration is the fundamental strategy to do so" (12).

Every day in the direction we get together, this ... We meet there in the morning and sometimes the dire also talks to us at recess time, we also get together to talk. I talk to my classmate; we agree either on dates or on strategies that we are going to use. Well look, when I have free time, I go and look for her at her living room or when she has free time she comes and looks for me. When I have physical education and English and I want to tell her something, well I go with her, or she comes with me. Or in the council meetings, when sometimes they put us to talk in pairs or with your groupmate, because there we also can intersperse ideas (Third grade teacher).

We observe that interpersonal relationships between colleagues are mediated by ties of friendship. Some teachers indicated that they have been working in the school for more than 20 years, which has strengthened feelings of cohesion and closeness. They commented that they have grown up with school, that is, they have gone through various facets of their family life cycle, so they know each other very well, there are friendship networks that go beyond school spaces to their personal and family lives.

We have many years, I think that affection and that attachment are forming one, and other companions who were very friends with me, very dear too, we have been here, and I said, I do not know what they give us here, but we anchored ourselves! There is a relationship between all of us, I believe that we have always done it, because it is achieved until we have a friendship, and good companionship, that is what I see (Second grade teacher).

The truth is, I have to say that in this school there is a very good work environment, that is, apart from the time that I have been here and because my partner has a lot of experience in this grade, well I have the confidence to go with her and tell her, how did you work this? and so. So, the truth does support me a lot (Third grade teacher).

The work environment in the school was described by the participants as a pleasant environment, this is materialized by the existence of good communication, mutual support, collaborative work, integration, agreements, respect, companionship, and coexistence. Conflicts occur in daily life that are resolved or dealt with quickly and using non-violent ways, always seeking consensus, mediation, negotiation for their attention and resolution.

Very favorable, very kind, there is harmony, yes there is camaraderie. Our route to improve the technical advice, which is done there, is programmed; the activities for coexistence are managed. It is one of our main objectives, of which we are managing (UDEEI Teacher).

When there is a problem, we look for how we can solve it, we do not sit idly by like this, we implement systems under the problems we see, then we start bringing out new things (School Director).

Our board of directors is very dynamic, we all contribute, and we make all the contributions valid, and we always reach a common point, that is, we agree, and everything turns out very well (Third grade teacher).

In the classroom, conflicts also arise in daily life that are dealt with immediately, we seek to listen to the parties involved, offer spaces for them to comment on what happened, what they feel, think and how they themselves would solve it. Teachers point out that maintaining relationship of respect and trust with students makes them able to express what happened, all without reaching violence.

I always try to be there, to solve it at that moment; I try to have a lot of communication with them, that they trust me, that they tell me things. I always tell them: tell me before, because sometimes they on impulse, well, they already hit him and then they hit each other. So, I tell them: always tell me beforehand to fix the situation so that it does not become more violent; I always try to give them the confidence that they will tell me everything (Third grade teacher).

The teachers commented that as professionals on this campus they feel fulfilled, full, they enjoy what they do, they feel proud to belong; They are satisfied, the years of teaching service in the school have made them identify with the community, they know the families, they feel that they promote and have promoted intergenerational changes. In addition, they indicated that the community needs them, that despite the difficulties of marginalization and violence that the neighborhoods where the school is located have, they are respected, supported, and recognized, for which they feel proud to belong to this educational center.

I really know, you can tell people, I think I identified a lot with them, so much so that I rooted myself, I stayed here, you know that teachers change schools and then I used to spend time here, and the I really felt comfortable working, I identified a lot with them, I could have gone to a more comfortable school, close to my house, and I didn't; I don't know, I felt like this was where I could give, where I grew up, where I identified a lot with its people; I feel comfortable, they are a medium that I feel needs me more than anything, that is, I am thinking of them not me, I am not thinking that it is close to me, I am thinking that I am fine there, I am comfortable, that is why I continue here. I have seen people from here prepare and be useful men and women, uh that gives me great satisfaction, that we left something true (Second grade teacher).

In a colloquial way we can point out that rootedness is fundamentally to lay foundations, to consolidate in a place, to “anchor” as one of the interviewed teachers points out; it is to a certain extent staying in a place that causes satisfaction and well-being. The long-standing teachers in this educational center stated that they feel safe, loved, they have established “roots” in the community, in the same way they highlighted that they “have grown” and established solid relationships with the families and with their classmates. The feeling of belonging and identification that they have exemplifies how their work has become something that they “do with pleasure”, and that it is an important part of their lives.

For Bellei et al. (2004), the perception of well-being, growth and commitment of teachers provokes feelings of identification with the community, in the same way this recognition generates a sense of satisfaction, manifesting itself in attitudes of attachment, affection, commitment and care towards the school itself, students, colleagues, families and the community in general.

3.3. Family involvement at El Mirador elementary school

I observe a lot of participation from the mothers of families, that is, whenever there is an assembly or an activity of the improvement route, it is complete and I say [to the director], that is a good opportunity because of the parents' support; I always appreciate that, it is a very good community! (A supervisor school).

The participation of families in school dynamics is a relevant factor (Acevedo et al., 2017; Valdes et al., 2009), which impacts the achievement or academic performance of schools. Achieving the active participation and full involvement of parents in this school is an arduous task; recognize the teachers, the director and educational supervisor. A real situation in this institution is that most of the family members work, so they leave care and school matters to the grandmothers, or the boys and girls are left alone at home, which makes it difficult to follow up. extra-class tasks and activities by teachers. Faced with this situation, the teachers use various strategies and technological means to maintain communication and closeness with the families, which they consider gives them good results.

There are moms who work and sometimes they do not find out about things and well, I basically did it for that reason then, I'm in a lot of communication with them. Whenever they have any questions or something that I am with them communicated by WhatsApp or at the exit that I see them, or they see me with complete confidence they have come to approach me (Third grade teacher).

The position of the teachers is to seek the approach with the families because they consider them a fundamental piece for the integral development of the students, and they take advantage of all the opportunities to be in contact with them to expose them to academic topics and bring them closer to the school. They seek to get them involved beyond the school organization issues in which they commonly participate, such as school improvements, and to be active in pedagogical aspects such as support for homework.

When there is a situation of talking with the father of the family or of absence from school, that they do not come or that kind of thing, they are already called, they take the reins with the father of the family and they send them to call that their child this , that your child that, in a matter of learning, is not a complaint, but: look ma'am, we want you to help us like this, to do this at home, to complete tasks that, because you do not bring them, you are told: you are important for us (UDEEI teacher).

I appreciate the community, it is very hardworking, very responsible, the mothers always despite having many social and economic problems, they always attend the teachers' instructions when there is an activity, you will always find them all here (School Supervisor).

In the focus groups and interviews carried out with parents, it was identified that they have high academic expectations of their children, they agree that they want them to have a better personal and professional future, which converges with the expectations they have the teaching community. The teachers and families of the El Mirador elementary school agree that school is important, they motivate the boys and girls to study and see education as something transcendental. This is an aspect that underlies the maintenance of closeness of families to the school, which is why they look for mechanisms to approach and maintain communication in formal and informal spaces such as meetings, special appointments, assemblies, on weekends when there are cleaning tasks or when projects are carried out, among others.

In this way, they monitor the progress of the use, attend to, and solve conflicts, generate empathy and interdependence. This coincidence of objectives means that the pedagogical-family work is amalgamated and is another characteristic that places literature as important in effective schools (Bellei et al., 2004; Murillo, 2007; Valdes et al., 2009).

4. CONCLUSIONS AND FINAL REFLECTIONS

Regarding the first area of analysis, there are two distinctive characteristics of the educational management of this school are organized and systems-based work and punctual, close leadership, which generates trust in the educational community. The school organization, especially the systems-based management that the director of this school develops, promotes equitable involvement and the fulfillment of the tasks that correspond to each actor -administrative, teacher, families-, all in accordance with the regulations, institutional procedures, programs, and projects, in which responsibilities are established under consensus and without any imposition.

This management style prioritizes order, compliance with the provisions and the effective development of pedagogical functions; Face-to-face interactions are promoted, seeing teachers as human beings with potential, with creativity, with high technical-pedagogical capacities and with areas of opportunity that are listened to and addressed. The principal considers that she has found a balance for the maintenance and effectiveness of the school, based on horizontality and dialogue.

At this school, we also observe that there are clear goals and expectations about what students should learn. There is joint planning and trust, which generates a complex network of values, roles, agreements and common attitudes between the principal and teachers. In turn, the forcefulness of the negative impact that the context can have not only on immediate school performance, but also on the academic achievement and schooling that student can achieve, promotes constant reflection on the performance of teachers and directors on the use of situated pedagogical plans, methodologies and strategies.

The second factor analyzed is teacher involvement, in this school the teachers have high standards of academic and methodological preparation, they are concerned about offering spaces for students to make the most of school time; they are deeply rooted in the community, of which they feel “an active and constructive part”; there is a common perception of trust, which is demonstrated in the maintenance of close, cohesive interpersonal relationships and a consistent professional ethic.

Finally, we describe the third factor of analysis that consists of the articulation between families and the school, we consider that, in this case, the relationship between parents and the teaching team is a positive and necessary aspect for comprehensive development. of students and their respective educational achievement. This educational center presents the challenges that countless schools have nowadays, and it is the approach of families, their participation and involvement in pedagogical activities. The difference that can be highlighted in this school is the way in which this challenge is addressed by teachers and administrators, who recognize that families are promoters and the ideal space that provides support and motivation for educational achievement.



The feeling is that the school needs the families and the families of the school, therefore, the quality of development, learning and subsequent school achievement will depend on how both institutions maintain and promote coincidences of objectives in favor of the well-being of the students. boys and girls.

In this research work we recognize that schools are producers and reproducers of their own dynamics and processes, that is, they can give optimal results and moving away from typical behaviors. According to this case study, there are factors such as: 1) good leadership in institutional management, that is, a committed director, who uses trust, empathy and good communication; 2) a consolidated teaching group, with community roots, who prioritize educational achievement, the use of pedagogies appropriate to the context, friendly, affectionate and close treatment between teachers, students, managers and families; 3) a close participation of many parents, committed and attentive to what happens in school classrooms.

It is concluded that it is possible to achieve educational effectiveness when the context is not seen as limiting, but as an enhancer of learning; when there is a group of committed teachers and managers; when working in harmony with parents and family, when all together value education as a tool to promote equity and personal and social transformation.

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