

Leadership, a way of life that should be taught from the beginning of school education

Liderazgo, una forma de vida que debe enseñarse desde que inicia la educación escolar

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Abstract

Context: Leadership is a quality that is reflected in attitudes and actions. It is built on the abilities of individuals and groups. It helps in decision making to achieve objectives that improve lifestyles, exploit skills and attitudes, and provide practical and effective solutions to everyday problems. In a globalized world, the leader can learn and enhance their knowledge about living with different cultures, languages, dialects, and ages. Objective: To analyze and explain, based on the literature, why leadership is a way of life that should be taught from the beginning of school education. Method: A systematic review of specialized literature was carried out using the following search engines: Library of Congress, Scholar Google, and Redalyc. Purpose: a) to define leadership, b) to show tools that support the teaching of leadership, c) to inform about the importance of teaching leadership. Results: Teaching leadership requires preparation and support, teachers should encourage students to stay motivated, enthusiastic to learn; teach them to deduce, distinguish, and form themselves. Conclusions: Leadership is a way of life that leads to the transformation of society. Not preparing leaders contributes to form people who are limited at a competitive level and in decision making.

Leadership, Education, Scholar

Resumen

Contexto: El liderazgo es una cualidad que se refleja con actitudes y acciones. Se desarrolla a partir de habilidades de personas y grupos. Ayuda en la toma de decisiones para alcanzar objetivos que mejoren estilos de vida, exploten aptitudes y actitudes y den soluciones prácticas y efectivas a problemas cotidianos. En un mundo globalizado, el líder puede aprender y potenciar sus conocimientos en torno a la convivencia con diferentes culturas, lenguas, dialectos y edades. Objetivo: analizar y explicar, con base en la literatura, porque el liderazgo es una forma de vida que debe enseñarse desde que inicia la educación escolar. Método: Se realizó revisión sistemática de literatura especializada empleando los motores de búsqueda: Library of Congress, Scholar Google y Redalyc. Finalidad: a) definir y clasificar liderazgo, b) definir herramientas que apoyen la enseñanza de liderazgo, c) justificar la importancia de enseñar liderazgo. Resultados: Enseñar liderazgo exige preparación y apoyo, directivos y profesores deben incentivar y motivar al alumnado a comunicarse, aprender, deducir, distinguirse, formarse y actualizarse. Conclusiones: El liderazgo constituye un estilo de vida que encamina a la transformación de la sociedad. No preparar líderes contribuye a formar personas limitadas a nivel competitivo y en la toma de decisiones.

Liderazgo, Educación, Escolar

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1. Introduction

Leadership is inherent to human beings; it is an intrinsic characteristic of the species. It is a quality that is reflected in attitudes and actions. Other definitions indicate that it is the ability to influence a group of people to achieve a vision or set of goals (Robbins, 2002). It is a highly interactive and shared process that involves the establishment of direction, vision and strategies to reach a goal (French, 1996). A leader is someone whose qualities, attitudes, knowledge and skills in the field in which he/she operates achieve synergies, motivate and commit in a non-coercive and individualistic manner (Páez-Gabriunas, 2004).

From the beginning of school education is the best time to develop permanent leadership skills. By motivating and opening the panorama of options and possibilities that children and young people have in the present and future, it is possible to avoid the school dropout that is widely rooted in several Latin American countries and that, with the opening of new schools, has not been able to be controlled.

When training leaders, the teaching of effective communication is indispensable, in addition to knowing the great advantages of learning from cultural and generational diversity. The negative effects of excessively controlling one's own actions or those of others must also be taught; a controlling subject opens the door to the development of destructive leadership such as: authoritarianism and narcissism. Authoritarians and narcissists are egocentric, overconfident, domineering, highly aggressive and unable to accept constructive dissent; which impacts the well-being of peers or collaborators generating permanent negative feelings (helplessness, dislike, anger, resentment) (Rosenthal & Pittinsky, 2006; Schyns & Schilling, 2013).

The leader must have a positive impact with ethics and values in each of his actions, whoever teaches leadership must be an example of this. The objective of this paper was to analyze and explain, using various bibliographic sources as support, why leadership is a way of life that should be taught from the beginning of school education.

2. Method

A systematic review of specialized literature was carried out using the following keywords: leadership, education, lifestyle, school. These words were chosen given the broad nature of the concept in order to focus on the teaching of leadership during school education.

The search databases were: Library of Congress, the largest library in the world; Scholar Google, Google's search engine focused and specialized in the search of scientific-academic content and bibliography; Redalyc; Red de Revistas Científicas de América Latina y el Caribe, España y Portugal - disseminates scientific articles in open access. Inclusion criteria: articles related to the teaching of leadership in school education. Exclusion criteria: references with a focus on labor leadership or in a specific area, for example, health sciences.

Selection process: after searching in each database, the following number of documents was obtained: Library of Congress: 22; Scholar Google: 50; Redalyc: 15; Library of Congress: 22; Scholar Google: 50; Redalyc: 15. Subsequently, we proceeded to review, select and compile based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria; and then analyze and structure the present paper.

3. Results

After entering the keywords in each search engine, 87 articles were obtained. When analyzed by applying the inclusion and exclusion criteria, only 20 articles met the requirements.

3.1. Leadership

Leadership is the ability that develops from the characteristic skills of individuals and groups. It can be exercised in any environment, whether educational, family, sports, professional, scientific, social, military or political. It is based on influencing and motivating others, transforming people and groups, it is a potential opportunity for individual and social growth that seeks positive results for all; completely excluding the development of narcissistic or egocentric characteristics of those involved (Excelencia, 2015).

Today's society needs leaders who have a solid foundation and know the right direction in which to walk to achieve their goals. To the question "What is leadership in society?", we must answer categorically that it is the assumption of responsibility, it is to be creative, innovative, assertive, risk-taking, optimistic and proactive.

Leadership development occurs from home education (Seago, 2012); and should be oriented and sustained during school education, since children learn to be leaders just when they begin to read, write and develop mathematical skills (Seago, 2012). The consideration of personality traits as an indicator and predictor of leadership style should be explored (Frey, 2007). Talking about leadership styles is a very broad topic that can be reflected in various classifications.

3.2. Leadership classification

Over the course of time, different types of leadership have been identified and developed, moreover, they continue to emerge day by day, in this section we will describe only some of the best known types. Precisely, Paez and Yepes, 2004, classify and summarize leadership in 6 sections (Paez-Gabriunas, 2004):

- Leadership as a personal characteristic: it is based on the skills of the person who exercises it.
- Leadership as a behavior: it concludes that in addition to the attributes that the leader may possess, he/she has a way of addressing others and the situations he/she faces that make him/her acquire the trust of his/her followers through the communication and vision he/she projects.
- Leadership as an ability: highlights that he/she must have the ability to carry out what he/she promotes in a constant challenge of renewal, motivation and ability to expose to the maximum the attributes of each of his/her followers.
- Leadership as a function: the leader, in addition to occupying the position of leader, must find a way to integrate the work of the team, motivating and involving them in such a way that they strive to achieve common results.

- Leadership as a process: implies the participation of different agents, which must interrelate, recognize and accept each other, with a clear direction towards a common goal.
- Leadership as an art: emphasizes the analysis of expectations and perceptions, and prioritizes interpersonal relationships as a vehicle for group success in a dynamic, continuous and unexpected process.

Another classification of leadership is focused on development, from which two concepts emerge:

Transactional leadership

The leader identifies the desires and preferences of his followers and helps them to achieve them, creates dependencies (Gómez-Rada, 2014;; JM, 1978).

Transformational leadership: the leader is characterized by the ability to inspire his followers to achieve greater goals than those initially planned and to obtain intrinsic rewards. He must use his ability to convince and transform his followers to continue growing and improving for the benefit of the group (Gómez-Rada, 2014; JM, 1978). Poutiatine, 2009; developed nine principles of transformational leadership with the goal of developing understanding of transformational processes. These principles help educators consider how the educational environment, methods and pedagogies favor leadership processes (Poutiatine, 2009). These principles are:

- Transformation is not synonymous with change.
- Transformation requires consent for change.
- Transformation always requires changing a second order.
- Transformation always involves all aspects of an individual's or organization's life.
- Transformational change is always irreversible.
- Transformational change involves letting go of any myth of control.
- Transformational change involves some aspects of risk, fear and loss.

- Transformational change always involves broadening the scope of one's view of the world.
- Transformation is always a movement toward greater integrity of identity; a movement toward wholeness. identity; a movement towards wholeness .

Another type of leadership that has emerged is sustainability leadership. These leaders are those who take discretionary actions to protect the environment and impact social welfare; with ethics and respect for human rights, making their core strategy in close collaboration with stakeholders (European Commission, 2011).

A sustainability leader must know that our world faces more challenges than ever before in terms of declining global ecosystems, population growth and unprecedented macroeconomic pressure. Most sustainability leaders recognize that while some of their efforts to create a more sustainable world will work, many will not (Beth, 2022).

Education for sustainable development underscores the idea that education is a way to equip students with the body of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values needed throughout their lives to enact sustainable development, progress, or growth. Education for sustainability (ES) is broader, as sustainability is integrated into education across the board and aims to change the behavior of individuals so that they live in tune with their society, their *environment and the planet* (Bianchi, 2020).

Policies to introduce sustainability issues in education have existed since the 1970s (Scott, 2009). However, their approach has changed emphatically since the beginning. Michelsen, 2016 has divided the evolution of education for sustainable development into three key phases: the orientation and experimentation phase, spanning from the 1970s to 1990, focusing on environmental issues; the transition phase, running from 1990 to 2000, with the introduction of development-related topics; and the expansive phase up to 2014 and onwards, which focuses on sustainability (Bianchi, 2020; Michelsen, 2016).

3.3. Useful tools to be learned by a leader

a) Being innovative

Innovation is the ability to exploit knowledge and translate it into potential educational, even economic, benefit. It is known that the innovative strength of a nation or organization can be modified by changing (parts of) its culture.

A practical implication of this finding is that a government can, for example, increase the innovative strength of its nation by encouraging cooperation between different institutions and by limiting rules and regulations that might cause barriers in the innovation process. To enhance a nation's innovative strength, for example, by implementing leadership education from the beginning of school education, a government needs to pursue a proactive policy of transforming the national culture. For example, changing the education system, for the good of society, and decreasing the power distance between teachers and students.

b) Leveraging cultural diversity

It is a fact that in a globalized world, students from different countries, regions, religions and even dialects coexist in classrooms. Diversity and inclusion continue to grow in importance and must be recognized as part of the dynamics of leadership. Geert Hofstede, 2001 identified cultural behaviors based on multiple studies from the 1980s involving more than 50 countries (Hofstede, 2001). Such cultural values must be taken into account when leading any action in order to understand the possible responses in the groups.

Hofstede's cultural values. Taken from Piet Moonen, 2017 (Moonen, 2017).

Power distance

Reveals the extent to which power and hierarchical relationships are considered essential in the culture in question. For example, it has been argued that bureaucracy, strict control and detailed instructions reduce creative thinking and activity.

Individualism vs. collectivism

Individualism can be defined as a preference for a loosely knit social framework in which individuals are expected to care only for themselves and their immediate family members. Collectivism, on the other hand, represents the preference for a close-knit social framework in which individuals expect (reciprocally) that their family members or members of a particular in-group will take care of them in exchange for unconditional loyalty.

Individualistic cultures value freedom more highly than collectivistic ones. Therefore, in individualistic societies employees have more opportunities to try something new.

Masculinity vs. femininity

Masculinity represents the preference in society for achievement, heroism, assertiveness and material reward for success. Society in general is more competitive. Its opposite, femininity, represents the preference for cooperation, modesty, discretion, tolerance, solidarity, caring for the weak and quality of life. Society in general is more consensus-oriented.

Uncertainty avoidance

This is how a society deals with the fact that the future can never be known: should we try to control the future or let it happen? Or just let it happen? Countries that exhibit strong uncertainty avoidance maintain rigid codes of belief and behavior and are intolerant of unorthodox behavior and ideas. Societies with weak uncertainty avoidance maintain a more relaxed attitude in which practice counts more than principles.

Long-term vs. short-term orientation

Long-term orientation can be interpreted as society's pursuit of virtue. Societies with short-term orientation tend to have a strong concern for establishing absolute truth. They are normative in their thinking. They show great respect for traditions, a relatively small propensity to save for the future, and a focus on achieving quick results. In long-term oriented societies, people believe that truth is highly dependent on situation, context and time. They show an ability to adapt traditions to changing conditions, a strong propensity to save and invest, and perseverance in achieving results.

Indulgence vs. restraint

Indulgence represents a society that allows relatively free gratification of basic, natural human urges of urges related to the enjoyment of life and fun. Restraint represents a society that suppresses need gratification and regulates it by strict social rules.

Monumentalism vs. self-efficacy

Monumentalism represents a society that rewards people who are, metaphorically speaking, like monuments: proud and immutable. Its polar opposite, self-efficacy, represents a society that rewards humility and flexibility.

After knowing the points that a leader must take into account in terms of cultural values in order to know the ideals he has learned throughout his life and understand the ideals of others, let us know what he must consider in terms of generational diversity.

c) Leveraging generational diversity

A generation is a set of individuals who, having been born in the same period of time, would be exposed to similar social and cultural experiences. It can also be defined as an age group that shares throughout their history a set of formative experiences that distinguishes them from their predecessors (Novo-Varela, 2015).

Currently, academic environments are marked by generational diversity, which represents a challenge when it comes to carrying out teaching-learning processes. Given that generational gaps are widening and what is relevant for one generation is not relevant for another, it is essential to know the ways of assuming knowledge, interpreting it and reviewing its concepts (Rocío Moldes, 2021). Any school that aspires to prepare its students for a global and diverse world must know and teach about intergenerational talent in the school itself. To do this, it is necessary to know what the intergenerational differences are and how these generations perceive each other. The following is a classification of the generations and the main characteristics of each of them (Figure 1).

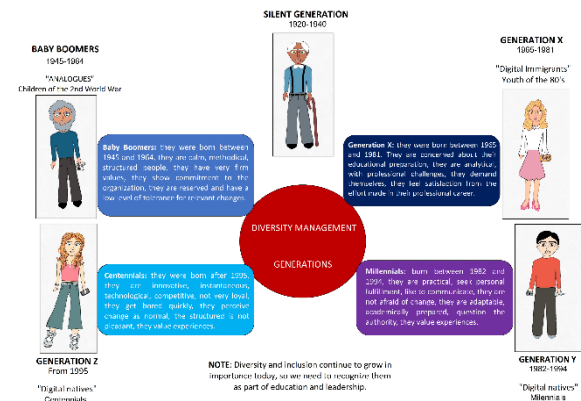


Figure 1 Intergenerational Diversity Management

By knowing the representative characteristics of the behavior of each generation, the understanding of their attitudes and reactions will be more obvious and will lead us to a better approach to them. When teaching about the transcendence of generational diversity, we must emphasize the teaching of collaborative leadership, which is based on the formation of teams and the abandonment of hierarchies. In addition to the indispensable teaching of emotional intelligence, defined very succinctly as the ability to effectively connect thinking and communication on the basis that our emotions guide (or bias) behavior and decision making (Damasio, 1994). Moreover, intergenerational diversity management is considered a type of leadership, "intergenerational leadership"; a dimension of collaborative or team-type leadership that prioritizes the generational factor combined with emotional intelligence to achieve effective communication (Rocío Moldes, 2021).

d) **Practicing effective communication - a cornerstone of leadership:**

Empathy (putting oneself in the other's place), active listening, respect, and together, the keys to effective communication practiced at the classroom level, will improve and promote interaction between students within the development of a work or project in order to enable them to achieve common goals based on real problems. Once this great tool is learned and practiced constantly in the classroom, the student will be able to use it in his daily life, bringing positive results individually and in his relationship with others.

The keys and elements of effective communication are shown below (Figure 2).

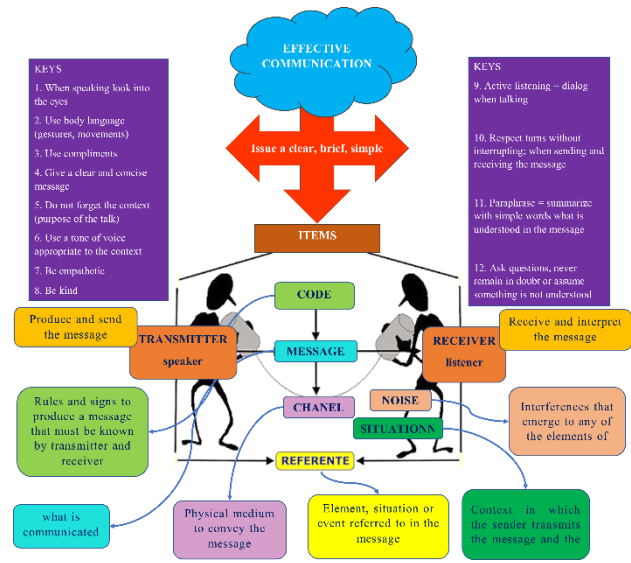


Figure 2 Effective communication and its key elements

The image shows twelve essential keys that a leader should practice when communicating, regardless of the message to be delivered, considering the six elements included in effective communication: code, message, channel, noise, situation and referent.

e) **To be highly ethical**

To achieve any leadership objective, the leader must follow to the letter a code of ethics or conduct as a guiding element for the behavior expected from peers or employees, as the case may be. A code of ethics articulates the student or professional mission and vision, as well as its values and principles. To enforce codes of ethics or conduct, it is recommended to practice the following:

1. Disseminate widely, preferably through mechanisms and channels in which the guiding axis or leader participates or is present.
2. Write the code of ethics in a simple and straightforward manner, with the goal that its content is understood by all, regardless of the reader's level of education.
3. Demand its compliance, designating a person in charge of supervising its observance.

4. Implement dissemination and training mechanisms that promote a better understanding of the contents of the code, preferably using examples and practical cases that allow relating what is established therein.

This is due to the fact that students, collaborators, workers or professors are often unaware of the regulations and rights they have (Excelencia, 2015).

It should be noted that a good leader motivates and informs his or her community, whether student or labor, which makes his or her actions more competitive and inclusive.

f) To be competent:

As Hofstede mentions in his sixth point, indulgence vs. restraint; there are cultures where the outlook on life is optimistic and positive, they are indulgent or relaxed, they enjoy life, they have many vacation days, for example, Latin America. There are other cultures where they are more pessimistic or negative, they are contained, therefore, they are competitive and hard-working, for example, Japan or the United States of America. Precisely, the term "competence", was originated in the United States and focuses on behavior, motivations and personal traits; it is used in reference to superior performance and high motivation (Gagliardi, 2015; Lester, 2014).

The term competence, of British origin, refers to practical skills, knowledge and understanding of the work environment and is linked to job performance (Winterton, 2002). Competency-based education is focused on outcomes, on enabling individuals to perform effectively in different situations and contexts (Rieckmann, 2012). Competence is one of the challenges that concerns any person who wishes to progress, to stand out as a student or professional; it allows him/her to innovate and adapt to demands derived from cultural norms, study or consumption habits, to improve at a professional level without sacrificing the standard of living. Competing, acquires relevance due to its legislative transcendence, there are specific laws that govern it, for example in Mexico there is the law for the development of competitiveness of micro, small and medium enterprises published in 2002 in the Official Journal of the Federation with a recent reform on March 13, 2019 (UNION, 2019).

Or the Law of competitiveness and commercial order of the State of Mexico published in the Official Gazette "Gaceta del Gobierno" on December 18, 2014 and reformed on March 10, 2022 (MEXICO, 2022).

Competing healthily creates bonds, support groups, drives, promotes active school and community participation, improves the quality of education and with it the quality and reliability of knowledge. A leader must manage these characteristics in order to motivate and foster collaboration, generate trust and interpersonal relationships in an easy way, recognize the contributions of others, have problem-solving skills, act based on his or her values, know how to set a good example, maintain an encouraging vision of the future and be optimistic, seek opportunities and take advantage of them, form a temperament of his or her own.

4. Discussion

Leadership is a way of life that leads to the transformation of society

As mentioned earlier, leadership has been given low priority, resulting in a confused and inadequate understanding of the essential nature of the phenomenon. Exceptional leadership requires better preparation and support (Pearson *et al.*, 2018). The need for a different mindset, the benefits of improving soft skills, embracing complex challenges, and seeking encouraging responses to uncertainty will foster leaders with a more rewarding future and higher self-esteem (Clarke C, 2016). Based on interdependence, dialogic communication and ethical leadership, the results will be a high personal reward that will allow the emergence of a progressive whole (Ladkin & Taylor, 2010). Therefore, for exceptional leadership to progress, perspective must be gained through self-reflection, accountability, inclusion, and shared responsibility (Pearson *et al.*, 2018).

Reflection on personal motivation, improved understanding of others, and a focus on solutions rather than obstacles will advance inclusive and ethical leadership, leveraging the benefits of empowered, diverse, and valued teams (A., 2016; Grant & Parker, 2009).

For a leader it is not enough to have talent, charisma, experience, motivation, good will... he or she must have ingenuity, courage and innovation. A leader's vision is formed by the dreams he wants to achieve. To achieve this vision, he must share it with his colleagues or collaborators so that everyone works in the same direction (Excelencia, 2015). This information gives us the basis to support why society needs leadership and the place where it begins is the place of study or daily work.

To teach leadership is to motivate to be better people and achieve dreams, leadership should be taught from early education to strengthen decisions and expand their panorama of opportunities. When teaching leadership, generational and cultural diversity must be considered; that meeting of people of different ages and customs that coexist in an educational or work space. A leader must be able to identify and manage the communicative preferences of each person, it is always necessary to appreciate the characteristics of each being, each person deserves individual management. Generational or cultural diversity is not an obstacle, but a strategic opportunity. Each generation has valuable aspects to offer, in addition to complementing, they are capable of driving levels of innovation and progress.

Managing diversity effectively allows organizations to build a collaborative educational and workforce. The leader must know how to redirect power, without abusing it, using it responsibly. If he/she acts in an authoritarian manner, he/she will be making a mistake and will lose his/her position. You must understand that all human beings have different motivations. A person's motivating forces may vary with the occasion and the situation. The leader needs to understand the ways in which a student, teacher, or any collaborator or employee acts. Therefore, he needs to foresee different types of motivation according to each of the situations in order to achieve stability in his group. It must be understood that the ability to inspire is essential in a leader. When we speak of inspiring, we are referring to the example he/she sets as a reference for others. The work environment or climate is a very relevant aspect, for this reason the leader must take care to keep it in balance and as a source of motivation (Excelencia, 2015).

The disillusionment of young people due to the lack of support from managers and teachers (Futures, 2016), from the environment at home or in their community, is a further indication that there is already a problem. If exceptional leadership is to be achieved, the understanding of well-being must continue to improve (Pearson *et al.*, 2018). Excessive control in one's own or the other's decisions or actions, opens the door to destructive leadership traits, where overconfidence, dominance, aggression and inability to accept proposals from students or work team; generates impotence, displeasure and permanent discomfort in the student body, faculty, colleagues and institutions. If the goal is exceptional leadership, the challenge will be to recognize and prevent the symptoms of destructive leadership (Krasikova D, 2013).

As Arnold J. Toynbee's phrase goes:

The growth of human societies is explained by the presence of minorities or creative personalities who always give successful answers to the challenges of the environment and who, because of their integrity and their commitment to the group, are freely followed by the majority (Toynbee, 1948).

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6. Conclusions

Leadership as a way of life should be taught from the moment a student sets foot in a classroom. Learning effective communication and how to make the most of the individual, generational and intercultural differences that this globalized world offers us, will allow the formation of successful leaders at a personal and work level. To become a leader you must first build a dream and then try to make it a reality with responsibility, ethics and teamwork.

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